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### Relational integration

*From integrating migrants to integrating relations*

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#### Publication date

2021

#### Document Version

Final published version

[Link to publication](#)

#### Citation for published version (APA):

Klarenbeek, L. (2021). *Relational integration: From integrating migrants to integrating relations*. [Thesis, fully internal, Universiteit van Amsterdam].

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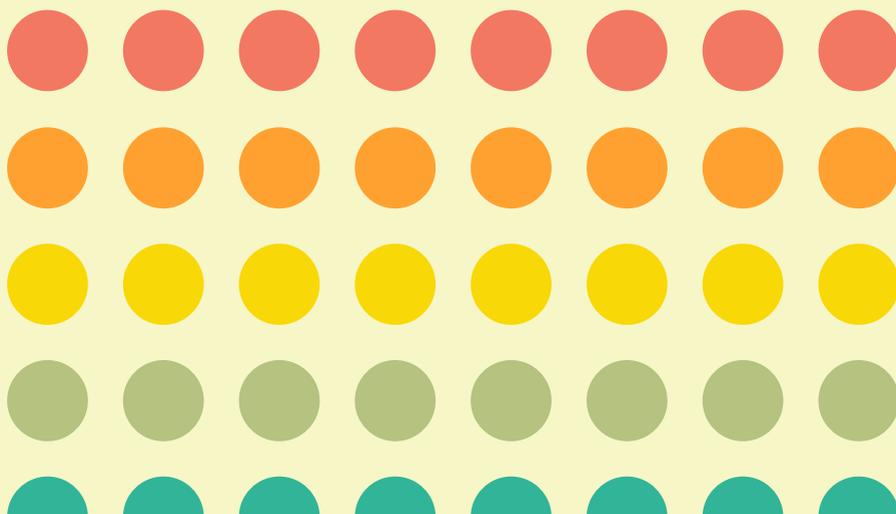
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# Relational Integration

From integrating migrants to  
integrating social relations.



Lea Klarenbeek



# Relational Integration

From integrating migrants to  
integrating social relations.

Relational integration, from integrating migrants to integrating relations.

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ISBN	978-94-6332-729-9
Lay-out	Loes Kema
Cover	Neel Laan
Printed by	GVO Drukkers & Vormgevers, Ede

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RELATIONAL INTEGRATION  
FROM INTEGRATING MIGRANTS TO INTEGRATING RELATIONS

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor  
aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam  
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus  
prof. dr. ir. K.I.J. Maex

ten overstaan van een door het College voor Promoties ingestelde commissie,  
in het openbaar te verdedigen in de Aula  
op 21 mei 2021, te 14:00 uur

door  
Lea Klarenbeek  
geboren te Utrecht

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## Preface

This dissertation, entitled *Relational Integration: from integrating immigrants to integrating relations* is partly based on the following collections of published articles:

- A) The discussion of the work of Willem Schinkel in Section 1.2.2 (pp. 13-17) is based on Klarenbeek, L. M. (2019b). 'Relational Integration. A Response to Willem Schinkel', *Comparative Migration Studies*, 7/1: 1–8.
- B) Chapter 2 is based on Klarenbeek, L. M. (2019a). 'Reconceptualising "Integration as a Two-Way Process"', *Migration Studies*, 0/0: 1–20.
- C) Chapter 3, as well as parts of the discussion on civic integrationism in the introduction (p. 25), are based on Klarenbeek, L. M., & Weide, M. (2020). 'The Participation Paradox. Demand for and Fear of Immigrant Participation', *Critical Policy Studies*, 14/2: 214–32.

*In this co-authored piece, I developed the main theoretical arguments and conceptual ideas, analysed the empirical materials that were available in English, and have written a substantive part of the text. My co-author has gathered and analysed the Danish empirical material that constituted the case-study, as well as contributed to the writing of the manuscript.*

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# Chapter 1



Introduction

## 1.1 Revising a controversial concept

In this dissertation, I introduce the notion of *relational integration* as an alternative to conventional conceptualizations of integration in the context of immigration. In doing so, I combine a conceptual analysis of the ways in which integration is theorized in contemporary migration studies with an argument for a revision of this theorization towards a relational framework and a concurrent relational research practice.

The concept of integration has become the subject of a heated scholarly debate over the last couple of years (Saharso 2019). For some scholars, 'integration' is a crucial concept for analysing the situations of people after immigration (Alba & Foner 2015; Penninx & Garcés-Masareñas 2016; Schneider & Crul 2010). That is to say: integration as a concept is used to investigate the positions that immigrants and their offspring end up in, after having settled in a new country: How do they find their place in these new institutional and social environments? Scholars investigate, for example, whether and to what extent people with a migration background do well in educational systems and labour markets. This is deemed particularly urgent in cases where immigrants and their offspring categorically end up in disadvantaged positions. 'Integration' is then used as a concept to analyse these positions, as well as the conditions under which these could be improved.

There is also a growing body of literature that criticizes this research focus on integration. In political discourse, it is argued, integration is a nativist political project,<sup>1</sup> used by governments for managing and subduing 'diversity'. The integration concept, for these scholars, is a deeply problematic discursive tool: as integration policies aim to discipline people with a migration background for the protection of the majority group and culture, it serves as a euphemism for xenophobic and racist ideals. Using the word for any academic enquiry would inherently reproduce such connotations, making it unfit for any scientific use. And indeed, integration as a subject in the field of migration studies is declining (Pisarevskaya et al. 2019). In some academic circles, it has become an out-dated concept.

I too criticize the ways in which the integration concept is conventionally used in migration studies. Yet, I also advocate a revised conception of integration as a way of investigating forms of inequality that involve social oppositions between 'immigrants' and 'non-immigrants'<sup>2</sup> – not because I take these oppositions to be a natural given, but because I take them to be salient problems in our social world. While I agree with the aforementioned critical

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1 Nativism is conceptualized as a form of nationalism that is concerned with internal minorities who are presented as a fundamental threat to the nation, to its general values, culture, or some other specific features such as racial composition (Guia 2016). The term, originally used in the American context (see Higham 2002), is now increasingly used by scholars to discuss current developments in Europe too (e.g. Dahab & Omori 2019; Kešić & Duyvendak 2019). I further elaborate on nativism in section 1.4.2.

2 I discuss my use of 'the (non-)immigrant' in section 1.6

scholars that integration research in its current forms tends to reinforce problematic, potentially racist and xenophobic political notions of immigration, integration, and diversity, I do not take this as proof that integration is, per definition, a normatively objectionable good, nor that *any* research on integration is inherently racist or xenophobic.

Rather, I argue that it is due to an *under-theorization* of the integration concept that many conventional research practices are insufficiently capable of resisting the oppressive connotations that the term has acquired in current political discourse. Rather than discarding the concept, my aim is therefore to critically revise its use, such that it enables us to investigate and criticize hierarchies and structural inequalities that are specific to contexts of immigration, without feeding into these normatively problematic discourses. In a way, it can be seen as an attempt to refute its current use in political discourse and to reclaim the word from objectionable nativist uses. By providing an alternative theoretical conception of integration, my aim is to provide a first step in this direction.

The central question that binds the different elements of this dissertation together is: *How should integration be conceptualized in the social sciences?* It involves a theoretical investigation into how we should be conceptualising integration, such that it does the conceptual work we want it to do. In doing so, my aim is not to capture a generally shared intuition of what we mean by 'integration', but, as Haslanger (2012) puts it, to ask how we might usefully revise what we mean by the concept for certain theoretical and political purposes (p. 224). My framework does thereby not provide a 'neutral' analytical concept, in the sense that it is stripped of its political or normative content (as e.g. Penninx and Garcés-Masareñas (2016) have argued for), nor a descriptive term for a linear process of mutual accommodation that will naturally take place over time. Instead, it should provide scholars with conceptual tools to grasp relevant problems of inequality in immigration contexts, while also being susceptible to the ways in which political discourses have made integration into a normatively dubious policy objective.

In answering this central question, I have taken what one could call a 'diagnostic conceptual approach'. I have first analysed existing practices of integration research, and have distinguished conceptual problems that constrain the insights that these research endeavours can generate. Based on this diagnosis, I present the notion of *relational integration* as an alternative theoretical starting point that should begin to fix these issues.

An important feature of this framework, which can be seen as the central thread of this dissertation, is that *relational integration is not concerned with 'the integration of immigrants'*. Conventionally, integration is conceptualized as a process of social change that, if successful, results in a situation in which formerly 'non-integrated immigrants' are now integrated into a society. In this view, integration is a descriptive characteristic that can be ascribed to (categories of) individuals who can be 'integrated' to various degrees. Integration, in this understanding, *always* pertains to the integration of immigrants. Non-immigrants, on the other hand can be helpful or obstructive vis-à-vis immigrants and thereby facilitate or impede the 'integration

of immigrants', but they cannot integrate themselves. To put it bluntly: in the conventional view, the main research problem concerns the *existence of 'non-integrated immigrants'*, and the disadvantaged positions that their 'non-integratedness' brings along.

By introducing and developing a relational conception of integration, I explicitly distance my framework from any approach that analyses 'the integration of immigrants'. My proposed relational approach to integration takes the *relations amongst people*, which can be established through institutions and interpersonal relations, as the primary site of integration. Relational integration takes place in the institutions and interactions that constitute people's co-existence as members of a society. In this approach, it is impossible to ascribe integration as a characteristic to a person or a category of people.

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In this introduction I proceed as follows. I start with the setup of my approach and the contribution it makes to the existing integration literature, both conventional integration studies (1.2.1) and its critical opponents (1.2.2). Regarding the former, I explain how (some of) the advocates of integration research may have acknowledged some of the problems that I address in this dissertation, most notably through the idea of a 'two-way process', but have not found systematic ways of avoiding certain conceptual pitfalls, due to insufficient theorization of the concept. Regarding the latter, I defend the concept of integration as a useful tool for investigating inequalities in the context of immigration even though I recognize that the word has taken on problematic connotations in political discourse. In section 1.3, I introduce my theoretical approach to this project of reconceptualising integration, which starts from the notion of the *integration problem*, rather than a positive normative ideal of integration. I discuss both the main contribution that can be made through this theoretical approach, as well as its limitations.

I then continue (1.4.1) by outlining two conceptual problems that are currently obscuring our understanding of the integration problem: i) an insufficient theoretical understanding of the role of non-immigrants in integration problems; and ii) an insufficient understanding of the normative wrong that makes a social phenomenon a problem of integration. In section 1.4.2, I introduce the notion of *residual civic integrationism*: I provide a short summary of the problematic characteristics of civic integrationist discourse, and then elaborate on how the conceptual problems of under-theorization as outlined in 1.4.1 pave the way for the reinforcement of problematic civic integrationist assumptions in research practices. A reconceptualization of integration needs to prevent tapping into these forms of residual civic integrationism.

In section 1.5 I introduce the notion of relational integration, and give a first outline of how this conceptual innovation would deal with the conceptual problems as outlined in 1.4. In 1.6. I make some remarks on the use of the word '(non-)(im)migrant' throughout the dissertation. I end with an overview of the chapters of this dissertation, outlining their main arguments and

the contributions they make to the literature (1.7).

## 1.2 Contribution to the field

A dominant general claim that runs through this dissertation is that conventional integration research practices focus too strongly on people with a migration background. This claim in itself is not new, and is endorsed by both proponents and opponents of integration research. In this section, I lay out my contribution in comparison to this literature.

### 1.2.1 Contribution to integration studies

I start by comparing my project to the claims that have been made by advocates of integration research. With critical integration literature on the rise, integration scholars are increasingly aware that the role of institutions in a receiving society deserves more attention. The fact that non-immigrants generally take on more powerful positions in society than immigrants do, makes the former more likely to be able to affect the course of social change. Hence, it is argued, we need to take into account the role of the receiving society when investigating the ‘integration of immigrants’ (e.g. Ager & Strang 2008; Alba & Foner 2015; Castles et al. 2002; Penninx & Garcés-Mascreñas 2016; Waters & Pineau 2015).<sup>3</sup>

In spite of this emphasis on the responsibility and influence of the receiving society, I take these approaches to be insufficiently developed. As I show in chapter 2, many of the studies that start from the assertion that integration is in fact a ‘two-way process’ do not consistently adhere to this claim in their operationalization of the concept. After asserting that integration is a two-way process, the attainment of integration is still measured through the positions and achievements of people with a migration background (see also Jiménez 2017 p. 10). A bias towards investigating the *integration of immigrants* is not automatically solved through the notion of the two-way process.

I argue that this is, at least partly, due to a lack of theoretical understanding of how this influence and responsibility of the receiving society should be ingrained in our conception of integration. The bias towards investigating immigrants for *their* integration has not been acknowledged as a *conceptual problem*. Scholars like Richard Alba (Alba 2017; Alba & Duyvendak 2019; Alba & Foner 2015) and Rinus Penninx (Penninx 2019; Penninx & Garcés-Mascreñas

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<sup>3</sup> Naturally, some research endeavours have been more receptive to this point than others: there are plenty of examples of articles and research reports that do not take much interest in the responsibility of the receiving society for the realization of integration (e.g. Koopmans 2016; Tony Blair Institute for Global Change 2019). Yet, I do not take this literature as the most interesting if we want to move forward conceptually. It would be too easy to take these studies as ‘the standard’ of integration research and emphasize my contribution in comparison to their content. Instead, I take some more sophisticated approaches as my starting point, analyse their conceptual frameworks, and aim to move forward from there.

2016) have indeed been emphasizing the importance of the institutions and attitudes of the receiving society for 'the integration of immigrants', and have operationalized their research into this direction. Nevertheless, on a conceptual level, their research keeps on investigating 'the integration of immigrants'. Throughout chapters 2-4, I argue that doing so tacitly implies that the fundamental problem of integration is the *presence of people who are currently not integrated*. It is 'their' social position that needs to be changed, and 'their' integration that needs to be monitored. The non-immigrant may have a (large) responsibility to help these people integrate, but in this conceptualization we can only discuss the 'integration of immigrants'.

Schinkel (2018 p. 4) has called this 'dispensation of integration' (see also 1.2.2), and I adopt this term – often in shorter form: *integration dispensation*. Integration dispensation prevents us from theorizing the role of the receiving society and the non-immigrant in a consistent manner because it makes them an external factor to the integration process. If I, as a white person with two white parents, whose families have lived in the Netherlands for as long as anyone can trace back, do not want to befriend someone because of their migration background, what is the integration problem? In a conventional understanding of integration, it would be that the person with a migration background is missing out on 'bridging social capital', which would then impede their integration. I, as a friendship-recusant may be appointed as the person responsible for fixing *their* integration problem, but it is not *my* problem: *my* integration is not problematized, nor is the integration of the norms and institutions that make my individual biases or attitudes a collective and institutional problem. These are seen as external factors to the problem.

My aim is to deal with the aforementioned research bias towards immigrants on a more fundamental level: rather than including non-immigrants as an issue of operationalization – as a factor that needs to be taken into account for the measurement of 'immigrant integration' – I address the issue on a conceptual level. My proposal for reconceptualizing integration as a relational issue means a shift in what we consider to be an integration problem and where this problem is situated. In doing so, potential unwillingness to connect with people with a migration background becomes part of the integration problem in itself, rather than a problem for the integration of others. This does not mean that we just 'flip' the whole concept such that it is now situated in the individuals on the other side of the boundary. In a relational understanding, it is the *relations amongst people* (expressed through institutions and interactions) that need integration.

### 1.2.2 Contribution to critical integration studies

My general approach differs from critical integration studies, in that I am not, primarily, conducting a discourse analysis through which I scrutinize integration research as part of a political discourse (see also Olsthoorn 2017). Scholars like Korteweg (2017), Schinkel (2017), Rytter (2018), and Favell (2019) have pointed to the discursive work that the integration concept can

do within a broader contemporary discourse on immigration and diversity, and the potentially oppressive effects it has for the people it studies. This, they argue, is what makes integration an inherently problematic concept without added heuristic value for the social sciences.

Although I fully share the analysis that integration research can reinforce political understandings of integration in problematic ways, I do not take the concept in itself to be irredeemably problematic. Instead, my aim is to diagnose the conceptual problems that constitute this reinforcement of political discourses, and provide potential solutions that should help scholars avoid the pitfalls of reinforcing political discourses. My aim is not to 'write against integration' (Rytter 2018), but to develop a framework of integration that could provide a theoretical foundation for a better research practice.

So, one of the points of departure of this project is that the problems which current integration research faces, are not insurmountable. In what follows, I outline my arguments for this claim by responding to Willem Schinkel's 2018 article '*Against 'immigrant integration': for an end to neocolonial knowledge production*'.<sup>4</sup> In the last decade, Schinkel has published a collection of articles and books in which he analyses the ways in which the concept of integration is (ab)used in both political discourse and social scientific research practices (2010, 2013, 2017, 2018). I choose his work as a starting point because it presents a fairly comprehensive overview of different problematic elements in integration research and how they are connected (and as such, it has been an important source of inspiration for writing this dissertation).

Engaging with Schinkel's work may be regarded a controversial choice by some. The style of argument that Schinkel has adopted for his most critical article (2018) is unhelpful for the content of his line of reasoning. In his discussion of the field he does not always do justice to the ways in which his colleagues try to deal with the problems they often acknowledge do exist. Aside from the inappropriate ad hominem attacks on some of his colleagues, Schinkel risks basing his argument on a straw man through over-generalization. He seems to take the worst reading of the worst practices of integration research as '*the academic field of integration research*', and if he is aware of any positive exceptions to his accusations, he does not name them.

Unlike Schinkel, I actually see an increasing awareness that the role of the receiving society needs to be taken more seriously in measurements of integration. In answering two of his main concerns regarding the integration concept, I argue a revised conception of it could enable us to *both* conduct empirical investigation into people and institutions in immigration contexts, *and* critically reflect on the (ab)use of the concept of integration because the latter is an inherent part of the former.

In Schinkel's view, 'integration' functions as a neoliberal and neo-colonial project that serves to govern diversity and monitor Otherness, and reinforces the normalcy, superiority and interconnected privileges of the white, enlightened, progressive, western citizen (2018, p.12).

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<sup>4</sup> The following section is an excerpt of (Klarenbeek 2019a pp. 1–6)

Schinkel suggests that any research on integration inherently reproduces these connotations, and integration is therefore not to be understood as something normatively desirable, nor can it be researched in a descriptive way. He starts his analysis from the observation that there is a tendency to uphold and re-produce a distinction between 'people who need to integrate', and 'people for whom integration is not an issue' (2018, p. 5).

This is, indeed, a manifest trend in the field. The research most vulnerable to Schinkel's critique is that in which integration is understood – although rarely explicitly defined – somewhere along the lines of 'immigrants scoring equal to non-immigrants' on indicators such as employment, income or educational attainment. The 'integration of immigrants' is then, for example, measured by comparing their employment statistics to the benchmark average of the non-immigrant. Subsequently, differences between these categories in which the immigrant categories are worse off (after being controlled for other socioeconomic indicators) signify an integration problem for the immigrant.<sup>5</sup>

This operationalization, Schinkel shows, triggers a number of problems, the most prominent being the aforementioned integration dispensation for the non-immigrant (2018, p. 6). Because non-immigrants are used as the benchmark for comparisons within integration research, they are themselves absolved *ab initio* of having any integration problems. Further, he adds the critique of 'deindividualized individualization' (2017, p. 30), which concerns the paradoxical ways in which immigrants are both conceived as individuals who are individually responsible for their own integration, while also being monitored for the integration of a 'migrant category' as a whole. So even when an immigrant is considered 'well-integrated' individually, she could still be part of the statistics showing that 'part of category X' has an integration problem, and as such, the monitoring of 'her integration' continues. Passing the mark of being well-integrated thereby does not make one 'a person for whom integration is not an issue'.

Through this integration dispensation, the receiving society is absolved from being a site of integration problems:

The specific ways in which immigrant integration is applied to the level of the individual thus in effect purify and immunize a preconceived 'society'. For as soon as one of a variety of problems occurs – unemployment, incarceration, homophobia – it becomes apparent that these are not problems that exist and occur within society. Rather, these become problems of individuals who (still) reside 'outside society' and need to be 'integrated'. 'Society' therefore has no problems, because any problem there might be is relegated to the individual level of immigrants, who can then be framed group-wise in terms of these problems. This way, 'society' is imagined as a pristine, pure domain that is without problems (Schinkel 2018, p. 5).

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<sup>5</sup> There has been plenty of critique on this benchmark-type research by other quantitative empirical scholars (Harder et al. 2018), and the research practice itself has become slightly out-dated. Still, as I argue in chapter 2, Schinkel's critique of 'integration dispensation' is not solved by these newer research practices.

For Schinkel, these conceptual problems are inherently political. They are manifestations of neo-colonial and racist ways of thinking about diversity in social scientific research. His resolution seems to declare it impossible to use the integration concept for any scientific purpose (2018, p. 8). In his view, the sole task of social scientists is to investigate how this discourse functions: how 'society' is imagined, how 'difference' is constructed, and how the concept of 'integration' in fact produces an extra burden for immigrants (2017, p.13).

I argue that we should not merely care about 'integration' as a political concept that needs to be unpacked by critical scholars. In our current global system, built on states and their corresponding borders, citizenship regimes and polities, immigration instigates situations in which people need to deal with (perceived) differences, which tends to invoke questions of membership and concurrent efforts to exclude people from the full benefits of this membership (see e.g. Bauböck 2017; Bloemraad et al. 2019; Shachar 2014). Immigration contexts are thereby prone to asymmetrical relations amongst people with and without a migration background, and to structural inequalities that emerge from these asymmetries (Tilly 2005 p. 73). This happens whether scholars investigate it or not. To discard the concept of integration might be a firm statement against the problems of current integration discourses and research but it does not contribute to solving problems of structural inequalities.

Further, to say that the current integration discourse creates and reiterates a discursive opposition between immigrants and non-immigrants is not to say that overcoming such oppositions is thereby logically or empirically impossible. Indeed, we know of historical cases, such as the Italian and Irish immigrants in the US, where people have received 'integration dispensation' after having been regarded highly problematic immigrants at first (see e.g. Alba 2017). We therefore need a conception of integration that enables us to analyse the processes in which these oppositions are overcome.

A different conception of integration, I argue, could solve the fundamental issues as diagnosed by Schinkel. Most crucially, the integration concept does not need to grant the integration dispensation to non-immigrants that makes them external to the integration problem. My conception of *relational integration*, as introduced in 1.5, is concerned with the integration of the relations *amongst* (categories of) people *that make up* a society.<sup>6</sup> *Relational integration* is not sited with the immigrant and thereby lifts the 'integration dispensation'. By discussing something as a problem of relational integration, it is not the immigrant who is constructed as a problem, nor is she primarily held responsible for a solution. Thereby, it does not discharge 'society' from having any integration problems. Conversely, it situates integration in the relations that together constitute a society (Emirbayer 1997 p. 295) .

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<sup>6</sup> Based on our current geopolitical institutions, this society is most likely to be a national society. However, we can think of different forms of (political) memberships within and across the borders of a national society that provide the foundation for their own integration dynamics (Bridget Anderson 2019). These are, however, outside the initial scope of this framework.

The second issue that I discuss here is Schinkel's statement that we should avoid all language concerning inclusion and exclusion. A focus on exclusion, according to Schinkel, 'reifies the 'inside'; into which one can supposedly be included [...]

What is possible is rather a differentiation in access to various forms of capital, a differentiation in positions, but such differentiations are – at least in the case of 'immigrant integration' – never really 'exclusions' (2018: 8).

Nevertheless, as Schinkel also acknowledges (2017, p. 219), inclusion and exclusion are real in people's attitudes, behaviour, experiences, perceptions and consequences. It is exactly this 'social realness' that makes them important for social theory. Integration does not need to be concerned with exclusion from society, but could instead focus on social closure *within* the relations that constitute a society (see also Korteweg 2017), which constitutes structural inequalities. It is exactly the differentiation in access to various forms of capital and positions that makes it so important to address the issue. Thus, the power to include and exclude is *in itself* an important form of capital. As such, the language of inclusion and exclusion provides a tool to analyse the 'gatekeeping power' (Alba & Duyvendak 2019; Jiménez 2017) that some people have over others.<sup>7</sup>

To answer Schinkel's rhetorical question, 'What added value does adding this second layer –'integration'– on top of an observed differentiation in socio-economic positions have anyway?' (2018, p. 7): investigating integration adds the potential for an analysis of the underlying relations of inequality through which socio-economic inequalities are constructed, maintained and transformed. It therefore enables us to analyse practices of exclusion, social closure and discrimination of people categorized as 'immigrant' within a society and in research.

An alternative solution to discarding the integration concept would be to come up with a completely new word that does not mention 'integration', so as not to be contaminated by the political discourse. The literature on interculturalism, for example, seems to have taken this route in its concern with the accommodation of difference within a polity (Bouchard 2011; Meer & Modood 2012; Scholten & van Breugel 2017).<sup>8</sup> Aiming to distinguish its specific ideals on the accommodation of diversity, while not taking on the allegedly bad reputation of either multiculturalism or civic integration, interculturalists have set up a new strand of incorporation thinking, which does not need the word integration. Similarly, one could argue that my

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<sup>7</sup> When using these terms, however, we need to keep in mind that inclusion in a certain realm can simultaneously involve oppression in another (see also De Genova et al. (2015) for a *of differential inclusion*). In chapter 5, I therefore further outline the need for an intersectional approach.

<sup>8</sup> Note that the interculturalist framework touches upon a different aspect of post-immigration dilemmas than my framework (i.e. accommodation of difference, rather than structural inequalities), which is also why I do not use the term.

framework does not need the word integration in order to develop a research agenda that focuses on equality and membership.

Nevertheless, I have chosen to stick to the word integration – with the addition of the word ‘relational’. There are already so many different terms being used in the field, ranging from incorporation and assimilation to multiculturalism and different variations on the word ‘pluralism’, and there is much debate going on about the exact differences between them (see e.g. Hartmann & Gerteis 2005). Adding more new words, I believe, would add to this semantic confusion, while also providing further ground for talking past each other. Scholars working on ‘interculturalism’ can easily be disregarded by integration scholars, assuming that they are just interested in different processes. Sticking to the word ‘integration’ is therefore a strategic, pragmatic choice, through which I aim to nurture a dialogue with scholars who are working on integration, and who should hopefully be interested in applying this framework of relational integration as an alternative for conventional research practices. Furthermore, it should increase the resonance of this research project outside academia, as the term remains current within wider public discourses as well. By not using the word, one risks sidelining oneself from these conversations.

Rather than demonizing the word ‘integration’, accepting that problematic predispositions of political integrationist discourse have made it into something negative and undesirable, I suggest we separate the notion of integration as a ‘category of practice’, by which I pertain to the ways in which the word features in political and social discourses, and as a ‘category of analysis’ through which we can investigate the social world (see Brubaker & Cooper 2000). In presenting a revised conception of the latter, the aim is to provide people the analytical tools to think about integration constructively, thereby hopefully also indirectly affecting its meaning as a category of practice.<sup>9</sup> If scholars like Schinkel are right in emphasizing that research practices are part and parcel of general integration discourses, we may as well try to change the latter for the better.

### 1.3 Theorizing ‘integration problems’

My proposed framework of relational integration is a framework of *non-ideal theory*, set to analyse problems as we find them in our current institutional setup of society. Rather than starting from the conceptual question of what perfect integration entails, my approach starts from the question of what an *integration problem* looks like. From there, I provide a definition of relational integration as an end state in which there is an *absence* of such integration

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<sup>9</sup> If we are to come up with new terms, we may want to think of alternatives for ‘civic integrationism’, which seems to be a euphemism for a discourse that is nativist and exclusive, rather than about the attainment of integration.

problems.<sup>10</sup> In doing so, I start from the assumption that it is possible to identify situations in societal relations that are undesirable and think about potential solutions for these problems without knowing what the ideal-type opposite of this problematic situation would look like exactly, other than a negation of this very problem.<sup>11</sup> Rather than theorizing what we should strive for, I theorize what we should want to move away from. This may seem less ambitious than providing a positive understanding of an ideally integrated society—in a way it involves taking a step back from defining solutions to defining problems. Nonetheless, I take this to be the most appropriate strategy, for three reasons.

First, there may not be just *one* such positive model of an integrated society. Depending on the social and historical context of a specific society, there may be several ways in which social relations can work in a way that one would consider them integrated. These relations could be embedded in rather different institutional setups, that would deal with cultural or religious diversity, historical inequalities and demographic make-up of societies, to name a few issues, in different ways.

I therefore take it to be more viable to develop a theoretically consistent conception of the integration problem than of 'the integrated society'. In addition to being of epistemic concern, this is also a strategic move: I expect that it will be easier for migration scholars to agree on what constitutes relevant problems of integration, than on the setup and conditions for a positive ideal of an integrated society. This will hopefully make the framework more appealing to a broader range of migration scholars, who could take it as a theoretical starting point for their empirical research.

Second, starting from the integration problem gives us a better understanding of the real-world integration problems that would need to be solved than a positive understanding of an ideally integrated society could. Starting from conceptualizing integration problems, and thinking about ways to solve these actual problems without setting full integration as a goal, we take a more incremental approach towards thinking about removing impediments of inte-

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<sup>10</sup> To provide a short preview: I argue that integration problems are, first and foremost, a subset of relational inequality (E. Anderson 1999). The kind of problems we should be interested in when investigating integration are those inegalitarian relations that constitute a hierarchy of 'legitimate' and 'non-legitimate' members of a society, based on a notion of 'migration background'. Hence, I define integration as the *absence* of the inegalitarian relations that constitute these hierarchies. I further elaborate on all these elements in section 1.6, and chapter 5.

<sup>11</sup> This approach can be placed in a tradition that is set out, for example, by Sen (2010), who argues that we do not need a full conception of a positive theory of justice to identify situations of injustice. Sen's aim is 'to clarify how we can proceed to address questions of enhancing justice and removing injustice, rather than to offer resolutions of questions about the nature of perfect justice' (p. ix). Similarly, thinkers like Anderson (2010) and Wolff (2015) have argued that we often have a clearer understanding of what characterises 'inegalitarian relations' than what a perfectly egalitarian relation would look like. They argue that defining egalitarian relations as the absence of such inegalitarian relations provides enough conceptual foundation to both detect problems of inequality, and to think about potential solutions for these problems: 'knowledge of the better does not require knowledge of the best' (E. Anderson 2010, p.3).

gration, one that allows for a trial-and-error process of finding solutions to concrete problems.

Third, the way we define and frame a problem is constitutive for the type of solutions that would be fitting to fix the problem. This claim has been made extensively in the analysis of policies and policy frames (Verloo 2005), but can be extended to the ways in which concepts are used within the social sciences as well. By depicting what is wrong with a certain situation, we give direction to who would be responsible for this wrong, to what should be done, and by whom (Verloo 2005 p. 24). Being thorough and precise in this depiction of the problem is therefore relevant beyond the conceptualization of the integration problem only. In conceptualising integration problems, we inherently provide a foundation for thinking about solutions as well.

On the other hand, if we want the framework to be a foundation for claims about potential progress in terms of *relational integration processes* in a specific empirical context, we need some sort of an evaluative standard of what relational integration as an end state entails. Any statement on how integration as a process 'works' – any claim on the conditions of successful integration or any measurement of integration – is, at least tacitly, based on such an understanding of 'completed integration', or an end state. One needs an idea of what 'more' or 'less' integration looks like. This is why I propose to use a negation of the conception of the relational integration problem as such a standard, so that we have a beginning of an understanding of *integrated membership relations*, without diverting towards an ideal-theory framework.

In its current stage of development, the framework that I present should be helpful for empirical scholars, first and foremost, in determining the subject of their research. By providing a theoretical conception of what comprises an integration problem, it should be useful for diagnosing such problems in the empirical world, as well as for differentiating what kind of social phenomena are relevant for their analysis. Further, the notion of integration as an end state should be helpful for evaluations of integration processes, for making claims about progress or regression in terms of integration.

I also want to be explicit about the limitations of the framework. In its current form, it neither provides a sociological theory of how integration processes work empirically and have worked in specific historical contexts, nor provides a roadmap for how integration processes will work in the future. Answering such questions requires the development of a comprehensive relational sociological framework of relational integration as a form of social change, which is outside the scope of this primarily conceptual project.

Second, whereas the framework helps us to analyse integration problems, it does not provide the theoretical ground for dealing with conflicting situations where integration in one area may lead to integration problems somewhere else. As such, it does not provide the parameters for analysing whether a specific development has made society as a whole more integrated, nor for setting policy priorities that should lead to such an integrated society.

This is not to say that this framework is completely detached from policy issues. In fact, I do

not take such a detachment to be possible, since politics and research mutually influence each other.<sup>12</sup> Integration research is pre-eminently known to have a *non-epistemic impact*, which is to say that it has impact in the real world beyond knowledge acquisition (Douglas 2000).

This provides an extra reason to be diligent in our conceptualizations.<sup>13</sup>As several scholars have shown, there is a tight connection between integration research on the one hand, and integration policy and discourse on the other (e.g. Bommers & Thränhardt 2010; Dahinden 2016; Ruhs et al. 2019). Because of the high political salience, governments tend to fund, directly and indirectly, a lot of integration research, thereby shaping the type of research and questions being asked (Scholten et al. 2015). Scholten et al. (2015) show how integration research increasingly influences both political and social discourse via symbolic knowledge utilization: integration research is used indirectly to substantiate policy choices or to (de)legitimize political actors. In addition, they point to the increasing role of the media as an intermediary between integration scholars and policy making, thereby affecting the public discourse on integration (pp. 330-334).

Integration research is thus inherently involved in shaping and legitimizing immigration and integration policies and discourses. Even though my framework does not provide guidelines for concrete policy recommendations, it is still relevant in terms of the conception of the *problem* that integration policies should be concerned with. The proposed shift of the integration problem from the integration of immigrants to the integration of social relations is thereby as relevant for migration scholars as it is for policymakers.

## 1.4 Diagnosing problems in current integration research

The first part of this dissertation, chapters 2-4, consists of analyses of conceptual problems in current integration research practices. Generally, I argue that the integration concept is under-theorized so that the exact problem that integration scholars are interested in remains theoretically opaque. Based on these analyses, I have diagnosed two main conceptual problems of under-theorization that I introduce below. In this section, I elaborate on how these problems of under-theorization are not only problems that impede our analytical understanding of integration and integration problems, but that also cause many integration studies to tacitly reproduce the problematic assumptions of the civic integrationist discourse, without necessarily acquiescing to civic integrationism explicitly.

### 1.4.1 Conceptual problems

The first conceptual problem that is addressed in this dissertation has already been discussed in section 1.2.1: the problem that integration is, by default, conceptualized as the *integration of*

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<sup>12</sup> See also the literature on Science and Technology Studies (STS), e.g. (Krebbekx et al. 2017).

<sup>13</sup> This paragraph is based on (Klarenbeek 2019b p. 3)

*immigrants*, either on an individual or on a collective level. Conventional integration research starts from the assumption that immigrants, or categories of immigrants, can 'be integrated' to various degrees. Non-immigrants on the other hand, have dispensation from integration. Again, this is not to say that the receiving society is not ascribed any responsibility for integration. Most scholars endorse the fairly intuitive notion that successful integration depends on the acceptance and inclusion of 'immigrants', and consequentially, that the receiving society plays a crucial role in its attainment.

However, these insights have not resulted in a theoretical understanding of integration in which 'non-immigrants' are an intrinsic part of the integration problem or the integration process: the integration dispensation remains unchallenged, and non-immigrants continue to be analysed as external factors to integration. Whereas non-immigrants can *cause* integration problems, they are not *attributed* integration problems. The central research problem for conventional approaches to integration is the '(un)integratedness' of immigrants, and the integration problem is thereby situated in the 'unintegrated immigrant'.

In chapter 2, I argue that conceptualizations which uphold this integration dispensation are both infeasible and undesirable. In short, I argue that they are undesirable (2.2.1) because they reinforce the problematic assumptions and implications of civic integrationism, as further outlined in the next sub-section. They are infeasible because integration, whatever way one defines it, *always* involves an act of *recognition* or *acknowledgment* by non-immigrants (see 2.2.2; 2.2.3, and chapter 3 in general). Conceptually, it does not make sense to treat this necessary condition of recognition as an external factor to the integration of others, rather than an intrinsic part of the process. The integration dispensation needs to be lifted, such that non-immigrants, through the aspect of recognition, become an intrinsic part of the integration problem. Therefore, the first analytical puzzle for my reconceptualization of integration is *how to conceptualize integration problems such that non-immigrants are an intrinsic part of them*.

A second problem – which, to my knowledge, has not been addressed before by any critical literature – is that the concept of integration is used for almost any development that concerns 'immigrants', without providing sufficient theoretical explanation for this inferred relationship. Social phenomena become about integration just by the mere fact that immigrants are involved. So when 'immigrants' enhance their educational attainments, if they participate in democratic processes (as further discussed in chapters 3 and 4), or do well on the labour market, this is taken to be a sign of integration,<sup>14</sup> while the opposite of such developments are taken to be signalling a decrease in integration.

While I do not wish to question the desirability of anyone doing well in education, politics or the labour market, I do want to question what it tells us about *integration* exactly (as opposed to other desirable outcomes, such as social mobility, democratic functioning,

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<sup>14</sup> As I show in chapter 3, these attainments may actually prevent integration by creating a backlash.

or freedom). Taking the involvement of people with a migration background as a sufficient condition for something being an integration issue both reinforces the aforementioned research bias towards immigrants and dilutes our understanding of the distinction between issues of integration and other social phenomena we may be interested in.

A more thoroughly theorized conceptualization of integration should prevent a situation in which the involvement of immigrants is a sufficient condition for something to be an integration issue. To this end, we need a theoretically consistent understanding of the normative wrongs that constitute integration problems, that is to say: what is integration a solution to? Hence, my second analytical puzzle is *how to conceptualize integration problems, such that we can differentiate them from other normative problems and concurrent social phenomena*.

#### 1.4.2 Residual civic integrationism

The third problem that is addressed in this dissertation follows from the two abovementioned conceptual issues, and concerns the tight link between research and politics as mentioned in 1.2. An insufficient theoretical understanding of the role of the receiving society and of the distinction between integration and other social phenomena leaves a theoretical vacuum that in practice is likely to be filled with harmful understandings of integration. Throughout chapters 2-4, I show how an insufficiently theorized understanding of the abovementioned issues paves the way for *residual civic integrationism*. With this term, I refer to the ways in which the currently dominant political discourse on integration may seep through in the work of migration scholars – with or without them necessarily actually intending so. Much has been written about the problems of current integration discourse. I provide a short summary here for those who are not as familiar with this literature.

Around the turn of the twenty-first century, debates on the arrival and incorporation of newcomers started taking a 'civic turn' towards what has been described in the literature as a *civic integrationist* discourse.<sup>15</sup> This turn is characterised by an explicit worry that people with a migration background would be incapable of being good citizens. In this discourse, 'citizenship', as the most fundamental form of membership of a national community, has taken on a nativist, culturalised notion, rather than a legal status (Duyvendak et al. 2016; Meer et al. 2015). Immigrants who do not live up to such standards of nativist, culturalised citizenship are portrayed as an integration problem (Schinkel 2010). To be 'unintegrated' has thereby become a stigma in itself, placed on immigrants individually as well as categorically.

In the civic integrationist logic, the integration of immigrants is a defence mechanism of the democratic polity against the illiberal threats that immigrants allegedly pose (De Genova 2018; Lentin & Titley 2011). In a nativist world view, internal minorities present a fundamental threat to the nation, to its general values, culture, or some other specific features (such as racial

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<sup>15</sup> For a debate whether, and to what extent, this civic turn has led to a decrease in national differences towards a more unified transnational discourse, see for example Joppke (2017) and Mouritsen (2013).

composition).<sup>16</sup> Culture is seen as a zero-sum concept, in the sense that the more space is given to 'immigrant culture', the less space there is for 'the native culture'. As a form of protection of the latter, the natives' cultural rights, as well as their political and socioeconomic rights, are prioritized over those of immigrants (Guia 2016 p. 12). The strong emphasis on the need for protection of 'Western values and culture' makes integration into a one-sided civic acculturation process, in which immigrants are expected to 'dissolve' into the majority culture (Mouritsen et al. 2019). The combination of the call for civic integration and the rise of nativism leads to the impossible instruction for people to integrate into a 'nation', whose collective identity does not seem capable of being stretched to include these people.

Civic integrationism also puts specific emphasis on the role of the state.<sup>17</sup> The discourse emerged together with a critique on 'multiculturalism', which has explicitly been declared a failure by politicians, journalists, and other columnists and talking heads, as a discourse that has paved the way for 'parallel societies' and has given too much space to 'illiberal practices' (Wright & Bloemraad 2012).<sup>18</sup> The central narrative of civic integrationism is that integration thus far has failed, and that the state needs to become more actively involved in integration processes. In order to regain control of integration, the state is urged to be more demanding and assertive, and to come up with policies to 'fix the deficient immigrant' (Kostakopoulou 2010) and foster the creation of 'good, liberal, self-sufficient citizens' (Jensen & Mouritsen 2017; Lithman 2010). It thereby bears resemblance to other present-day management and policy reforms in the areas of employment and welfare: it uses state or administrative power to place responsibility upon the individual to become self-governing, resilient and adaptive to the current demands of the society and market (see Chandler and Reid 2016).

Integration scholars have good reasons to stay away from the civic integrationist discourse. With its nativist underpinnings it fundamentally violates basic egalitarian principles, such as the equal moral worth of people, and has highly stigmatizing and exclusive implications (Van Houdt et al. 2011; see e.g. Korteweg 2017; Lentin & Titley 2011). Moreover it makes integration basically incompatible with the presence of those designated as 'immigrants', because they are by definition 'non-native'. It thereby makes integration into a game, in which immigrants are expected to score 'integration points' (Horner & Weber 2011), but that cannot be won because immigrants cannot overcome their 'non-nativeness'.

The two conceptual problems discussed in the previous section are not just analytical problems in themselves. They also enable civic integrationist assumptions about integration to

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<sup>16</sup> In addition to immigrants, everyone who advocates a more pluralistic narrative of belonging to the nation ('multiculturalists', 'cosmopolitans') is also perceived as a threat. This follows the logic of 'the friend of my enemy is my enemy' (Kešić & Duyvendak 2019).

<sup>17</sup> The following paragraph is based on a section of (Klarenbeek & Weide 2020 p. 217).

<sup>18</sup> For a recent example, see the report 'The Glue that Binds. Integration in Times of Populism', (Tony Blair Institute for Global Change 2019).

seep through into research practices, without scholars necessarily acquiescing to this discourse. Portraying integration as a characteristic that concerns immigrants per se makes the central problem of integration 'the non-integrated immigrant'. As argued in section 1.3, problem definitions give direction to solutions and may reinforce a bad status quo. If the non-integrated immigrant is our central integration problem, we think about integration processes as processes in which the problem of the non-integrated immigrants must be fixed. This paves the way for implications about the deviancy of immigrants who currently do not function well as members of society, and who need to (be helped to) enhance their situation in terms of certain indicators in order to be 'integrated' and well-functioning.

The same goes for the second conceptual problem, which concerns the tendency that every development that involves people with a migration background is considered to be an issue of integration. Particularly research endeavours in which any progress on certain indicators, such as an increase in political participation or enhancement in educational attainment, is inherently considered to be integrative, tend to reinforce an understanding of integration in which immigrants are currently falling short on a certain indicator which prevents them from being well-integrated. The implication then is that these shortcomings need to be fixed for integration to be successful.

A more thorough theorization of the concept should help scholars to build research upon consistent theoretical assumptions, rather than implicitly building on residual civic integrationism. Therefore, the third question for this dissertation is: *How can we conceptualize integration without feeding into civic integrationist discourse?*

## 1.5 Relational integration as an alternative starting point

While diagnosing problems in a research field is in itself a valuable academic exercise, and indeed, makes up a substantive part of this dissertation, I do not want to stop here. To this end, I propose an alternative framework of 'relational integration'. This framework does not provide a full-fledged research approach for conducting 'relational integration research' – further development would be necessary to provide more precise guidelines for the operationalization of relational integration. Its main contribution is to provide an alternative theoretical starting point for integration research, based on an analysis of concrete problems in current research that need fixing.

As outlined in 1.3, the framework consists of two main theoretical 'checkpoints': a revision of what we consider to be an *integration problem*, and based on that, a characterisation of integration as an end state as the negation of this integration problem. The former serves to provide a theoretical starting point for why we should be interested in 'integration' in the first place, as well as to give pointers for distinguishing integration problems from other phenomena,

that may involve immigrants but are not necessarily about *integration*. The articulation of an end state then functions as an evaluative standard which could tell us something about the status of integration in a specific case when conducting empirical relational integration research.

While the framework is outlined in more detail in chapter 5, I provide a short preview here as to give the reader some idea of what alternative direction I propose, whilst reading the chapters on the problems of conventional integration research. In short, I argue for a conception of *integration problems* as a subset of problems of relational inequality (hence my terminology of *relational integration*). Relational egalitarians argue that, when investigating structural inequalities, we should primarily be concerned with the inegalitarian relations that constitute superior and inferior positions in society and that generate and justify inequalities in the distribution of freedoms, resources, and welfare (E. Anderson 1999, p. 312). So rather than taking the unequal distribution between people in itself as a focus point, relational egalitarians investigate the relations in which valuable (im)material goods are distributed. These relations can range from egalitarian to inegalitarian (hierarchical) and affect people's position in society both in terms of welfare as well as social standing or status (Fourie et al. 2015).<sup>19</sup>

More specifically, my conception of relational integration problems is concerned with relational inequality in terms of *membership relations*. Immigration inherently changes relations of membership, as people who formerly did not reside within a certain territory and were not subjected to its rules and institutions, now transform into people who do and who are. Yet, we see that full membership, in both its formal and informal aspects (I further elaborate on these in 5.3), is not automatically extended to newcomers, neither immediately, nor over time (Bloemraad et al. 2019; Bonjour & Block 2016; Sadeghi 2019), such that those categorized as 'immigrants' do not enjoy social standing as equal members, and are perceived and treated as inferior, second-class members. This, I argue, is the core of the relational integration problem.

I introduce the notion of 'legitimate membership' to pertain to the mechanisms of these inegalitarian relations in terms of membership, thereby engaging with sociological literature on legitimation processes (see Johnson et al. 2006). The legitimacy of membership pertains to a generalized perception that people are 'rightful' members of a society – that their membership is appropriate, desirable and 'as it should be', and that they are treated accordingly. As such, it is connected to general ideas about the deservingness of, and entitlement to, the benefits that this membership offers. These make some people be seen as 'real members' of a society (typically non-immigrants), whereas the membership of others is questioned (typically immigrants).

The attainment of relational integration involves moving away from such differentiations in the legitimacy membership. Relational integration is attained when membership relations are characterised by *the absence of the status hierarchies and corresponding*

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19 I discuss the distinction between relational equality and distributive equality in chapter 5.

*social boundaries of membership* in which members, often those who are categorized as 'immigrants', are degraded to second-class members.

This relational conception of integration problems changes our understanding of the integration problem, and where we should be looking for it when investigating integration empirically, as it involves a shift from 'the integration of immigrants' to the integration of membership relations. It thereby gets rid of the integration dispensation that makes non-immigrants an external factor to the 'integration of immigrants'. Because relational integration is concerned with the integration of the relations amongst people, non-immigrants are an intrinsic part of what constitutes an integration problem. Further, the framework of relational inequality provides a foundation to distinguish integration problems (i.e. problems of relational inequality) from other issues that may involve immigrants but are not directly about integration (even if they are related).

## 1.6 (Non-)(im)migrants

Terminology is a sensitive issue in migration studies. Amongst its standard jargon we find many contested concepts that spark a continuous debate amongst scholars from the many sub-disciplines and approaches within the field. In addition to contestations around the concept of integration, the notion of *the migrant* is also increasingly questioned within the field. In this section, I highlight two issues that are specifically relevant for this project, and make some remarks on my use of the term throughout the dissertation.

### 1.6.1 Politicization of 'the migrant'

The first difficulty with the word 'migrant' is that the current politicization of immigration issues in general (see e.g. Grande et al. 2019; Krzyżanowski et al. 2018) makes it difficult to disentangle the migrant as a 'category of practice' and as a 'category of analysis' (Brubaker & Cooper 2000). This distinction, also mentioned in 1.2.2, is meant to distinguish between categories of 'everyday social experience, developed and deployed by ordinary social actors' (ibid. p.4), and categories used by social analysts, used for academic enquiries on the matter.

As a category of practice, the word 'migrant' is generally not used as a descriptive term to denote anyone who has ever migrated in their lifetime. 'Putting it crudely, in political debate, a 'migrant' is a person whose movement, or whose presence, is considered a problem' (Bridget Anderson 2019 p. 2). In its current politicized form, the word migrant as category of practice in the western world often pertains to non-white people, who are 'not from here', nor from countries that we consider to be similar to ours (see e.g. Mügge & Ter Haar 2016).<sup>20</sup> As such,

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<sup>20</sup> For analyses of how migration studies does tend to reinforce such political notions of 'the migrant', see e.g. Dahinden (2016) and Bridget Anderson (2019).

some people are 'migrantized' more than others. In some immigration contexts for example, the word migrant has tacitly become a synonym for 'Muslim' (Balibar 2007; De Genova 2018)(see also the Danish case study as presented in chapter 3 of this dissertation). The question then, is how to use the word 'migrant' as a category of analysis to descriptively pertain to a category of people without reinforcing these biased assumptions of the migrant as a problematic subject (Bridget Anderson 2019).

It may not be possible to completely distance one's research approach from the connotations that the word migrant has gained as a category of practice. As scholars, we cannot fully control the images that emerge in the minds of our readers when confronted with the word. What we can do, however, is make the distinctions between categories of practice and categories of analysis explicit in our work, as well as to explicitly distance ourselves from problematic categories of practice. This is something that I have tried to do throughout the dissertation. Where possible, I make a distinction between the category of analysis: 'immigrants' as a theoretical, descriptive notion for anyone who has migrated – in particular to a different country – within their lifetime (thereby not making any distinctions based on countries of origin), and as category of practice: people categorized as (im)migrants or 'migrantized' people, to refer to the empirical tendency in which the 'immigrant' label has acquired meaning beyond this descriptive term.

Additionally, a second strategy for staying away from the assumption that the 'migrant' is inherently problematic is to 'de-migranticize' one's subject of inquiry, as has been called for by Dahinden (2016). Next to making explicit distinctions between categories of practice and categories of analysis, Dahinden argues we need to question the 'migrant' as the primary, a priori research subject of migration studies. This may seem strange, since the differences between 'migration' and 'non-migration', and between 'the migrant' and 'the non-migrant', are 'the *raison-d'être* of migration research' (p.4). However, she argues, if researchers do not critically reflect on their use of these oppositions, and instead just assume that they are relevant for whatever it is they study, these oppositions take on an essentialist character: they reinforce the notion that 'migration-given differences' are an inevitable category of difference that are naturally of interest for social sciences.

After all, migration and ethnicity are not always the most important criteria for explaining social processes or people's social practices and affiliations. Instead, it is an empirical question whether, and in which contexts and structures, these categories are relevant to understanding given phenomena and how they intersect with other categories of differences, like gender, class, age and so on (p.5).

Dahinden therefore urges scholars to 'move away from treating the migrant population as the unit of analysis and instead direct the focus on parts of the whole population, which obviously

includes migrants' (p. 11). As such, migration studies would become more aligned with social science and social theory in general, only questioning the relevance of 'migration' and migration-given differences as a second step (p.8).

The framework of relational integration as introduced in this dissertation does exactly this: it de-migrantizes the conception of integration. Relational integration problems, as conceptualized in chapter 5, are not situated in the 'unintegrated immigrant', and are not instigated by the 'migration-related difference' that immigrants allegedly bring upon their arrival. Instead, integration problems are conceptualized as a subset of relational inequality, and thus potentially relevant beyond contexts of immigration (see 5.3). The concern for migrants in this conceptual project on integration, is primarily based on the empirical observation that migration and migration background are currently employed as foundations for relational inequality. So the role of 'migration' in relational integration problems is taken as an empirical issue that is currently salient, not as theoretical given that is naturally salient. The extent to which integration problems are migration-related problems, and how they intersect with other markers for relational inequality, such as gender, race, class, would need to be part of empirical investigations.

#### *1.6.2 Homogenization of 'the (non-)migrant'*

Second, 'the migrant' and 'non-migrant' as categories of analysis are not without their problems too, particularly because they potentially homogenize two rather heterogeneous, deeply intersectional categories.<sup>21</sup> I already touched upon this problem in the previous sub-section, in questioning the relevance of migration-related differences vs. other social categories that have proven to be relevant for questions in the contexts of immigration (e.g. Bonjour & Duyvendak 2018). What it means to be 'a (non-)migrant' depends on many different factors. Next to these intersectional considerations, the experiences and situations of migrants are also substantially influenced by geopolitical issues, such as the border and citizenship regimes of the destination country, as well as the relations between the country of origin and the country of destination.

Such problems of homogenization, as well as solutions to this problem, have both theoretical and empirical aspects. In empirical studies, scholars need to be careful in the construction of their categories, as well as the generalizability of their findings and take an intersectional approach to their research subject. When investigating relational integration empirically, the heterogeneity of both immigrant and non-immigrants will constitute different contexts and dynamics of integration, that cannot, necessarily, be generalized to common claims about integration amongst 'all immigrants and non-immigrants' in general.

In chapter 3, which contains an empirical case study on political participation in Denmark, my co-author and I have accounted for such heterogeneity first by attending to the different legal

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<sup>21</sup> The literature on 'super-diversity' directs our attention to this problem in more detail (Grzymala-Kazlowska & Phillimore 2018; Vertovec 2012).

statuses that people may hold, which are highly relevant in terms of political participation. Second, we have attended to how claims around religion and liberal values generate different positions for migrants when it comes to political participation. We have added a footnote at the beginning of the chapter further explaining our use of the term throughout the chapter.

For the theoretical part of this dissertation, I have tried to deal with the issue in two ways. First, by incorporating the issue of intersectionality in our understanding of integration problems. To understand the constitution of such problems, I argue that it is important to understand the variation in *legitimacy* that is ascribed to people as members of a society. This variation, I argue, needs to be approached intersectionally – for immigrants and non-immigrants alike. I further advance this argument in section 5.3. Second, in taking on a relational approach to integration, I emphasize how the category of ‘the migrant’ and ‘the immigrant’ are only meaningful within the context of the specific membership relations in which the people that are described by these terms are situated. This means that these categories always need to be contextualised within the relations amongst members, as well as the relations between members and the larger entity that they are ‘a member of’. ‘The migrant’ and ‘the immigrant’ are therefore by definition contextual categories.

### 1.6.3 (Non-)migrants, (non-)immigrants, and people with(out) migration background

Throughout the dissertation, I use the terms ‘migrants’, ‘immigrants’ and ‘people with a migration background’ more or less interchangeably, just like the terms ‘non-migrants’, ‘non-immigrants’ and ‘people without a migration background’. When scrutinizing the subtle differences between these terms, we can say that the ‘migrant vs. non-migrant’ opposition emphasizes the mobility aspect of the opposition, whereas the ‘immigrant vs. non-immigrant’ opposition emphasizes the ‘incoming’ movement, suggesting more about the connectedness to a specific territory. It also has a more permanent character than the notion of ‘the migrant’ does. An ‘immigrant’ is here to stay, whereas a ‘migrant’ may move again.

I use ‘people with a migration background’ in situations where I particularly pertain to people who may not have immigrated themselves, but who are referred to as the x<sup>th</sup>-generation, having ancestors who did. Note that I use this term not because I take a migration background to be important indefinitely, or to reify the notion that this migration background is *naturally* important, but because it seems the most appropriate term in cases where this migration background is deemed salient in social relations amongst members of a society.

## 1.7 Outline of the dissertation

This dissertation combines (excerpts of) articles that have been published, supplemented with additional material for a more comprehensive overall argument. It can be divided in two parts.

The first part (chapters 2-4) shows the need for a reconceptualization of integration in terms of relational integration from three different angles. It serves to map and categorise the problems of the current field of integration studies, and thereby also gives direction to the solutions that are proposed in chapter 5, which is dedicated to outlining the actual framework itself.

Chapter 2 sets the scene for the first analytical puzzle: how to include the receiving society in our conceptualization of integration. In this chapter, I scrutinize the oft-made claim in integration research (and policy-making) that integration is a 'two-way process'. While I endorse the critique on one-way conceptions of integration that reproduce the problems of civic integrationism, I show that the 'two-way alternative' is undertheorized, and that most conceptualizations of the 'two-way process' fall short if we want to steer away from one-way understandings of integration and from civic integrationism. Crucially, I argue that only a relational understanding of integration can avoid the pitfalls of 'one-wayness'.

Chapter 3 comprises an empirical case study of the discourse around immigrants' political participation in Denmark, conducted together with Marjukka Weide. This chapter provides an empirical illustration of the importance of taking the receiving society as a fundamental and intrinsic part of the integration process. Weide and I investigate the ambivalence in European immigrant integration discourses towards the political participation of immigrants in Denmark. We show how this ambivalence generates what we call a 'participation paradox', which is constituted by two apparently conflicting, but potentially mutually reinforcing characteristics of the civic integrationist discourse. The first emphasizes the need for immigrants to be active in order to attain a well-integrated society and well-functioning democratic polity; the second is a call for the protection of liberal democratic institutions from the alleged 'illiberal threats' that migrants pose to society. Immigrant participation is thus both demanded and feared. We discuss how this paradoxical dynamic affects the democratic position of immigrants in Denmark. This case study illustrates how more immigrant participation does not necessarily equal more integration: as long as immigrants are not acknowledged as equals in terms of their social standing as participants, participation may actually cause a backlash of exclusion. We cannot understand integration without investigating the acknowledgment as equals as a fundamental element of what integration entails.

Chapter 4 approaches the same connection between political participation and political integration, this time from a conceptual angle. It attends to the second analytical puzzle that I laid out above, which is concerned with disentangling integration from other immigrant-related phenomena. In the chapter, I question the standard view of immigrant participation as

a proxy for political integration. I provide a new, six-fold taxonomy of the virtuous qualities that could be ascribed to political participation in general, and of political participation of immigrants specifically: education, identification, epistemic democratization, emancipation, legitimation, and interest satisfaction. Based on this taxonomy, I analyze (i) why political participation would be important in general; (ii) why the political participation of immigrants would be important; (iii) what attributing this quality to the participation of migrants implies about a conception of integration, and (iv) what we would know about this interpretation of integration if we were to use the political participation of migrants as a proxy for its measurement. I then show that none of these participation virtues is appropriately related to political integration: they either presuppose that integration is a process aimed at fixing immigrants' deficiencies, or they cannot account for the fact that the realization of what makes participation valuable for integration always depends on the institutionalization of some form of political equality in the polity. Either way, immigrant participation is not an adequate proxy for integration.

In chapter 5, I further develop the notion of relational integration as introduced in 1.5 of this introduction. I start by outlining the integration problem as a subset of relational inequality, as an answer to the normative question of what kind of issues we should be discussing under the denominator of 'integration'. Specifically, I argue that relational integration problems pertain to hierarchies in membership relations, through which superior and inferior membership positions emerge. I then continue to further outline the social processes of legitimation, through which these hierarchical relations are maintained and transformed. After, I turn to a theorization of integrated membership relations as the absence of such hierarchies. Relational integration thereby involves a decoupling between membership relations and legitimation processes and towards recognition as equals instead.

Chapter 6 makes up the conclusion of this dissertation. Here I return to the two conceptual problems that I have discussed in this introduction. I give an overview of how they have been discussed throughout chapters 2-4 of this dissertation, and then discuss how a framework of relational integration, as introduced in chapter 5, should enable scholars to deal with these issues.



# Chapter 2



Two-Way Integration

## 2.1 Introduction<sup>22</sup>

In the field of integration research, we find a (tacit) consensus that integration is a ‘two-way process’. Numerous scholars explicitly endorse this notion by arguing, roughly, that the attainment of integration does not only depend on the commitments, efforts and achievements of ‘immigrants’ and their offspring but also on the structure and the openness of ‘the receiving society’ (see e.g. Ager & Strang 2008 p. 177; Castles et al. 2002; Lucassen 2005 p. 19; Modood 2004; Phillimore 2012; Waters & Pineau 2015). In line with this consensus, several scholars criticize integration policies, discourses, and fellow researchers for being too ‘one-way’: for disproportionately emphasizing the responsibility of people with a migration background and underestimating the role of the receiving society (see e.g. Anthias 2013; Bommès & Thränhardt 2010; Coello et al. 2014; Penninx 2010; Schinkel 2018).

Yet, the concept of two-way integration itself has been insufficiently theorized. Although the notion seems to be generally accepted by most scholars, it is inconsistently adhered to in theoretical and empirical practice – that is the way integration is conceptualized, as well as operationalized in order to conduct empirical research – making it more of a platitude than a coherent theoretical starting point. This problem shows in many dominant approaches, leading scholars to build their work on internal contradictions, to talk past each other, and to implicitly add to or reinforce a one-way integration discourse.

In this chapter, I offer a critical reflection on the existing notions of the two-way process. In doing so, I argue that the notion of the two-way process, in its current use, does not provide a satisfying answer to the question of *how to conceptualize integration problems, such that non-immigrants are an intrinsic part of them*. The most important issue in this analysis is that, generally, two-way approaches maintain the integration dispensation for non-immigrants on a conceptual level thereby upholding an understanding of integration as a process for ‘immigrants’ only. As a consequence of this dispensation, the integration problem is reduced to a problem that primarily concerns immigrants: only immigrants can ‘be integrated’ to various degrees, only immigrants can ‘have an integration problem’, and only immigrants can ‘go through an integration process’. The central research problem for conventional approaches to integration is the ‘(un)integratedness’ of immigrants, and is therefore situated with the immigrant. Consequentially, these approaches cannot completely get away from the problems that one-way integration conceptions generate.

I start by addressing the problems of undesirability and infeasibility that arise from one-way conceptualizations of integration. There are very few scholars who actively and unambiguously advocate one-way conceptions of integration. The purpose of this section is not to present some innovative critiques on prominent, salient research practices. Rather, it

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<sup>22</sup> This chapter is based on Klarenbeek, L. M. (2019a). ‘Reconceptualising “Integration as a Two-Way Process”’, *Migration Studies*, 0/0: 1–20

functions as an assessment of the problems that conceptualizations of ‘two-way processes’ are supposed to solve. Further, it provides the basis for understanding how, by not attending to the issue of two-way integration properly, the civic integrationist discourse seeps through in research practices, as this discourse is highly compatible with such one-way understandings of integration.

In section 2.3, I continue by showing that most conceptualizations of the two-way process in current integration literature do not suffice to solve these issues. Based on an extensive literature review, I make a distinction between three general understandings of integration as a two-way process: i) the receiving society is *affected* by the integration of immigrants; ii) the receiving society can *influence* the integration of immigrants; and iii) non-immigrants and immigrants *integrate* with each other. Most researchers start from the first or second understanding which, I argue, both fail to avoid the pitfalls of one-wayness. They do not offer a theoretically consistent outlook on the role of the receiving society and non-immigrants in what they take to be ‘integration problems’, nor in the ‘integration process’ that is supposed to fix these problems.

It is not my aim to undervalue the research conducted by the authors that are discussed in this chapter. Many of these research endeavours are concerned with issues of structural inequalities, and have generated important insights in inequalities in the fields of education and employment, to name a few salient issues. I discuss certain approaches in detail, because I take these to be useful approaches within the integration literature, providing elements that we can build on for a reconceptualization of integration. At the same time, however, discussing them also serves to illustrate how persistent the conceptual problems in integration research are.

## 2.2 The problems of conceptualizing integration as a one-way process

The notion of integration as a two-way process may not seem intuitive to some. Generally, the arrival of immigrants does not mark the start of a new country, polity, and society, where everyone has to get used to a new environment – immigrants are the ones arriving in a new social context in which they need to ‘find their place’. Consequentially, it would be argued, integration is not an issue of mutual adaptation: without the arrival of immigrants, there would be no integration problem at all. The implication thereby is that immigrants integrate and non-immigrants do not. Non-immigrants were ‘in their place’ already.

In an ideal-typical one-way conceptualization of integration, only immigrants have an integration problem, only immigrants take part in the integration process and it is primarily their responsibility to make it work. The general understanding of ‘the integration problem’ is the existence of unintegrated people. Non-immigrants, on the other hand, enjoy full

dispensation from integration. In this section, I briefly outline the problems of conceptualizing integration this way – they have been discussed more elaborately elsewhere (see e.g. Korteweg 2017; Kostakopoulou 2010; Schinkel 2017). I distinguish two types of problems: problems of undesirability and problems of infeasibility.

### 2.2.1 *Problems of undesirability*

Based on a literature review of critical integration studies, I distinguish three different undesirable implications of conceptualizing integration as a one-way process. First, doing so presupposes an underlying picture of a society composed of domestic individuals and groups, who are already 'integrated' (Joppke & Morawska 2003 p. 3). Society as such is therefore absolved from any integration problems, which are located 'outside society' (Schinkel 2008). Such an integrated, harmonious society, however, has never existed and portraying it in such a way restricts us in dealing with the increased fluidity and super-diversity of modern society (see also Grzymala-Kazłowska & Phillimore 2018). One-way conceptualizations constitute 'an erasure, or minimization of the significance of past social cleavages and conflicts' (Astor 2012 p. 344). Hence, it makes no sense to use this image as a starting point for academic research.

Second, if the goal of integration is for outsiders to become part of an already integrated society, 'society' takes on a prescriptive character. Rather than a description of an assemblage of social life in all its diversity, society becomes a concept which prescribes a dominant norm of what the social life should be (Schinkel 2018). Integration is then a process for those who lack certain qualities that are needed to adhere to the norm of 'being a member of society', i.e. a process for people who are somehow deviant (Kostakopoulou 2010). Such assumptions of what is 'normal' in society have undesirable stigmatizing and marginalizing consequences (see also Haslanger 2014).

Third, if integration is a one-way process that only concerns immigrants, the very concept itself creates a division between two kinds of people: people who either need to integrate or have once gone through an integration process (those categorized as immigrants or people with a migration background), and people for whom integration has never been an issue (those categorized as non-immigrants and potentially some white immigrants). To be 'well-integrated' (to have overcome the deficiencies of being an outsider) becomes the highest possible achievement for an 'immigrant' (Schinkel 2013). Thereby, even 'well-integrated' immigrants are not truly equal to non-immigrants – if they were, they would not be 'well-integrated' but their integration would not be an issue at all (see also Horner & Weber 2011).

Note that the assumptions and implications of a one-way integration approach sit comfortably with the civic integrationist discourse as introduced in chapter 1. One-way conceptions of integration inherently resonate well within this discourse, and are therefore likely to have normatively undesirable implications beyond academic enquiries (recall my remarks on the non-epistemic impact of integration research in section 1.3).

### 2.2.2 Problems of infeasibility

A conceptualization of integration as a one-way process is not only undesirable, but also infeasible and therefore inept as an analytical heuristic tool. Integration, in *any* understanding of the concept, involves change on the side of non-immigrants, at the very least in some form of recognition or acknowledgement.<sup>23</sup> Even if one would advocate a one-way understanding of integration as an adaptation process for immigrants through which they would become indistinguishable from non-immigrants, there are no universal, objective standards of when a person has 'adapted enough', and therefore, the integration process has no natural end point. Successful integration requires a moment in which non-immigrants, in their role of gatekeepers, acknowledge this adaptation and start treating people as indistinguishable, both on an institutional and an interactional level. Without this recognition, the transition from 'not integrated' to 'integrated' cannot be made, and an alleged migration background will continue to make a social difference. As long as this acknowledgement is absent, immigrants can adjust as much as they like – they can change their norms, behaviours, their names, or even their physical appearance – but they will always remain a separate category of people – a category of outsiders. A lack of acknowledgement or recognition makes successful integration impossible.<sup>24</sup>

Social change is feasible if there is an action (or a set of actions) available to an actor which could bring it about (Gilbert & Lawford-Smith 2012). Integration as a one-way process is infeasible because it is logically unattainable without change on the side of insiders: there is no action available to outsiders that could bring about this acknowledgement unilaterally. There might be things they can do to *entice* the acknowledgment of insiders (ranging from adaptation to revolution) but it will never enable them to perform this acknowledgement themselves. One cannot erase one's migration background, and as long as it is taken to be a salient marker for othering people, integration is infeasible.<sup>25</sup>

An additional problem of infeasibility of the one-way process is that acknowledgement or recognition is not just something that is 'bestowed' on the immigrant, thereby allowing them to integrate, leaving the recognizing actors unchanged. No matter how we conceptualise recognition exactly (e.g. recognitions as equals, as fellow citizens, as full members, as 'integrat-

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23 Although there are scholars who advocate one of these terms over the other, recognition and acknowledgement are often used interchangeably and I do not make any substantial distinction between them.

24 While this argument is, in itself, not new, I argue below that its consequences have not been taken far enough in conventional integration approaches. At best, the recognition element has been incorporated as an external factor for the integration of immigrants, rather than making it an intrinsic aspect of the integration process.

25 Someone might object that if people would be able to fully hide their migration background, one-way integration would be possible. This may be true in the hypothetical case that people are successful in such attempts. However, apart from the moral objections that such a conception of integration would raise, it seems a virtually unattainable task. There are plenty of historical and current examples of how differences are socially salient even if they are not immediately noticeable through visible or audible markers. If having a 'migration background' is deemed to be salient enough it will be hard to hide: people will actively look into one another's migration background, and migration background will continue to make a social difference.

ed'), the recognition process inherently involves change in a) the way people categorise each other, b) the way people behave towards each other, and potentially c) the way people conceptualise themselves, as their self-conceptualization can no longer be based on opposition to the Other (although it may lead to a self-conceptualization based on the opposition of a new Other). Integration requires and constitute social change in all actors involved.

A potential nuancing response to this critique on one-way integration may be that some aspects of integration may intrinsically involve recognition, but not all. Language acquisition is often used as the ultimate example of a purely pragmatic skill that immigrants need to attain in order to realize equal opportunities within a society. People who do not speak the dominant language of the community they live in will, for example, not have equal opportunities of finding a job, and consequentially, are more likely to be unemployed. These 'unequal opportunities', then, are due to the fact that they lack the skills that are necessary for functioning in a certain community. The solution to such 'integration problems' is that immigrants need to adjust, and acquire the required language skills.

This objection does not hold because in terms of integration, even language acquisition is not just a matter of practical adjustment. This is the case for two related, but slightly different reasons. First, while language may indeed be an important barrier to equal opportunities, we need to take into account that non-immigrants hold the power to set the standards for what it means to be linguistically proficient *enough* to be recognized as a skilled speaker of a language. And, since non-immigrants may feel that they have an interest in maintaining certain privileged position over immigrants, these standards could always be on the move in order to protect this privilege (in the previous chapter, I have referred to this as 'gatekeeping power').

Second, the integration value of language does not depend merely on whether one speaks a language, but also on whether one is being heard. Language, as an integration issue, is not just a pragmatic issue, but can be, and has been, culturalised just like other integration issues (Duyvendak et al. 2016). These dynamics have been analysed by Heller (2013):

The linguistic rules of the game are important for deciding what counts as citizenship and who counts as a citizen in a number of ways, from the display of membership in the category of "legitimate speaker"; to the appropriate deployment of forms recognizable as belonging to the standardized, valued, national "language" (a systematization and institutionalization of variable forms and practices); and to the detailed pragmatics of communication in everyday life. These are not inherently tied together—one can count as a legitimate speaker without being able to deploy the legitimate language (excuses will be found for you), just as one can speak the legitimate language without counting as a legitimate speaker (and so you will not be heard). Full "citizenship," that is, the ability to participate in activities through which valued resources are produced and distributed, depends on the full range of linguistic legitimacy: speaker, hearer, activity, form. People and performances are judged in those terms in ways that regulate access to full citizenship,

and that refuse legitimacy to some or, even, actively de-legitimize them (p. 190).

So, while it may be likely, although not necessarily inevitable,<sup>26</sup> that immigrants learning a new language would be helpful for all kinds of reasons, the value of this learning process for the attainment of *integration* does not merely depend on the learning curve of immigrants, but also on the demands and standards of non-immigrants, and whether they are willing to *recognize* people as skilled speakers in this language.<sup>27</sup> I use this example of language to argue that, in terms of integration, there is no such thing as ‘just’ a practical issue of adaptation that will help one in participating in society – not even learning a language. Even linguistic integration ought not to be analysed as a one-way process.<sup>28</sup>

From a feasibility perspective, integration requires active change on the side of non-immigrants. I put an emphasis on this because much of the conventional integration literature, as I discuss in the following sub-section, consistently speaks of integration as a process of immigrants *becoming accepted* by the receiving society, not as a process of non-immigrants *accepting* immigrants. The actor for the act of acceptance is obscured in this conception, and by using this formulation one risks implying that ‘to become accepted’ is something that immigrants could or should do. I return to this below.

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26 Although this may seem an unlikely scenario, we can think of several examples in which not speaking the national majority language does not necessarily obstruct people from finding a job, such as in situations where immigrant communities have become so substantial that a second language has become informally institutionalised (Spanish in California), or where English, as a lingua franca, subdues the necessity to learn a new language in order to communicate (like in many expat communities all over the world). Depending on one’s understanding of integration, ‘learning the language’ may not be as straightforward a requirement of integration issue as it may seem at first.

27 A very convinced advocate of one-way integration could still argue that it is possible for immigrants, potentially over several generations, to become linguistically indistinguishable from non-immigrants. One-way linguistic integration would be attained once all linguistic differences between the immigrant and the non-immigrants have vanished, (assuming that there would be an objective standard of how non-immigrants speak). Still, this would be no guarantee that language proficiency will be valuable for integration in terms of becoming indistinguishable, because it is as Heller puts it, not a guarantee for ‘being heard’. The value of language proficiency for integration depends on some form of recognition.

28 Additionally, this example of language also circles back to the second puzzle that I set for this dissertation, which is to distinguish social phenomena that involve immigrants from integration issues. Though the acquisition of a certain language by people with a migration background may be interesting for all sorts of linguistic or sociological reasons, we should be careful not to automatically make it into a matter of integration.

### 2.3 General understandings of integration as a two-way process

Because of these desirability and feasibility problems, we need to move away from any 'residual one-wayness' in our understanding of integration. However, the concept of two-way integration, which is supposed to provide a solution, remains under-defined. In this section I show that endorsing a general two-way notion of integration is not sufficient to avoid or solve the problems of one-wayness: it matters *how* one conceptualizes it. Based on an elaborate literature review, I map the different understandings of two-way integration into three general categories: i) The receiving society is *affected* by the integration of immigrants; ii) The receiving society can *influence* the integration of immigrants; and iii) People (immigrants and non-immigrants alike) *integrate* with each other. I argue that only the latter can help us move away from one-way integration discourses.

I have three additional remarks before I elaborate on this categorization. First, the clustering of authors within these categories may in some cases be surprising. Particularly the second category brings together scholars from rather different approaches towards integration research. When reading it, one should keep in mind that the categorization is based *only* on the conceptual and causal roles (tacitly) attributed to the receiving society and non-immigrants in integration processes. In doing so, I have formed the categories around the *implications* of the research discussed, not on the authors' intentions. The illustrations provided serve to bring to light a line of reasoning about the concept of a 'two-way process', rather than to systematically classify the authors that are referenced. It is not my objective to name and shame scholars who investigate integration, to call them out for not conceptualizing integration in a relational understanding, or for asking the wrong research question. The aim is to hone in on a concept that is much used but undertheorized, and show how these approaches, even though they may generate interesting insights, do not suffice to solve the problems of one-wayness.

Second, it is perfectly possible to find multiple understandings of the two-way process within one research endeavour, particularly since the first two understandings (affect and influence) do not exclude each other theoretically. Accordingly, they can be found conjointly in the work of several authors (see e.g. Lucassen 2005 p. 19; Penninx and Garcés-Masareñas 2016).

Third, in my discussion of the literature I examine both frameworks of integration and assimilation, treating them as more or less interchangeable concepts. While there are discussions about the different connotations of integration as a European concept vs. assimilation as an American concept (e.g. Schneider & Crul 2010), these distinctions seem to have, more or less, faded over the last decade. This has particularly resulted in American scholars taking on the notion of integration – more than the other way around.<sup>29</sup> If there still are some subtle differences between the concepts, they do not affect the ways in which the notion of 'two-

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<sup>29</sup> In Europe, assimilation as a category of practice still very much carries the connotation on a one-way process of cultural adaptation. This is definitely not the case for the American approaches on assimilation that are discussed below.

wayness' plays out: these American frameworks on assimilation (e.g. Alba & Nee 2003; Jiménez 2017) can therefore be discussed as part of the some body of literature as studies on integration.

### 2.3.1 *Receiving society is affected by the integration of immigrants*

A first potential understanding of two-way integration concerns the *effects* of integration. Its focus is on the change that societies go through as a *consequence* of immigration and integration. When newcomers arrive, settle, and start to secure their place within a society, this society experiences change, such as an increasingly differentiated composition of the population, a diversification of the political landscape, or new institutions that emerge for the accommodation of difference. As a result, it is argued, integration is not a one-way process: it affects both sides. In this line of argument, change in the receiving society is mostly depicted as an inevitable by-product, or spinoff, of integration. It is a passive form of change, to be explained as an effect of, or, slightly more active, a response to the actions of immigrants. The receiving society, although undergoing change, does not have an integration problem. As such, the site of and responsibility for integration are exclusively situated with immigrants, while non-immigrants still enjoy their integration dispensation. The distinction between those who integrate and who do not integrate is upheld, and since change within the receiving society is depicted as a consequence—something that happens *after* integration, rather than a condition for integration—it is implied that immigrants could integrate without the input from the receiving society. Consequently, it faces the same problems of undesirability and infeasibility as depicted in 2.2, and cannot serve as a serious alternative for one-way integration approaches.

To the best of my knowledge, there are no authors who consistently advocate this understanding of the two-way process. We can, however, find slivers of it throughout different research endeavours:

[Integration] is a two-way process. The host society does not remain unaffected. The size and composition of the population change, and new institutional arrangements come into existence to accommodate immigrants' political, social, and cultural needs (Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas 2016 p. 11).

Through formulations like 'being (un)affected' and institutional arrangements that 'come into being', the change in the receiving society is portrayed as an effect of the integration of others. The actors who inhabit these institutions remain anonymous, and are in no way implied to be an intrinsic part of the integration process.

In denouncing this understanding of the two-way process, I do not claim that the receiving society is *not* affected by the settlement of newcomers. My point is that this does not make for a profound understanding of a two-way integration process, as it cannot solve the problems of one-wayness.

### 2.3.2 *Receiving society can influence the integration of immigrants*

A second understanding of the two-way process involves the assumption that the receiving society can influence the integration of immigrants. This is by far the most dominant use of two-way integration in the scholarly literature, with some scholars being more sensitive to avoiding issues of one-wayness than others. To give some more insight into how these varying approaches feed into the problems of one-wayness in similar ways – albeit to different degrees – I discuss four frameworks in more depth at the end of this sub-section. These examples serve to illustrate the persistence of the problem of one-wayness in current integration literature, but also offer interesting suggestions for what a new conceptual framework of integration should adhere to. What unites the scholars in this cluster is that integration is seen as a process of mutual exchange between immigrants and their *migration context*. This migration context is investigated both for its institutions and the behaviour of its majority population: research is conducted on the effects of structural characteristics of the host society – e.g. education systems, welfare systems, national philosophies of citizenship – whether they leave opportunities for immigrants to integrate, and on the effects of discrimination and stereotyping. In contrast to the first understanding, change in the receiving society is not only seen as an *outcome* of the integration process, but also as a potential *input* for its attainment. Integration problems are partly explained by the institutions of the migration context, so that this context is thereby – to varying degrees – attributed some responsibility for the integration of immigrants.

Nevertheless, this conceptualization is limited by the fact that the non-immigrants and the institutional context are always perceived as exactly that: a context. They are not depicted as in need of integration, nor is their integration monitored: they continue to enjoy integration dispensation. Their attitudes and behaviour are attributed instrumental value for the integration of *others*: they can facilitate the integration of others – for example by banning discrimination or by adjusting institutions towards more inclusive ones – but are never scrutinized for *their* integration. They are, to use more causal terminology, perceived as a potential independent variable. The ‘two-wayness’ of integration is not theorized consistently, as an inherent part of the integration concept.

A noteworthy tendency that comes with this approach concerns a tacit differentiation between ‘immigrants as active agents’ and ‘non-immigrants as passive entities’. Esser’s (2004) theory of ‘intergenerational integration’ is an example of a framework that exclusively focuses on the different choices and strategies available to migrants within a certain context (p. 1135):

the basic model of intergenerational integration explains different structural outcomes of immigration [...] as aggregated consequences of the immigrants’ rational “situation-logical” actions geared to the prevailing circumstances (p. 1139).

In this framework, integration outcomes are explained by the actions of immigrants, dealing

with a given context. The actions and strategies available to non-immigrants are not mentioned, through which they are reduced to passive actors whose choices and strategies are apparently not relevant for the explanation of integration outcomes. Only on a more structural level do they make up some form of context or 'prevailing circumstances' that immigrants need to deal with. This notion of the receiving society as a passive integration context is very deeply ingrained in the literature, and is discernible, in more or less tacit versions, in many different research endeavours. 'Immigrants' and their offspring are portrayed as agents who integrate through 'purposive action' (Alba & Nee 2003 p. 14). 'They' enhance their human capital (Kogan 2011) and levels of education (Kristen & Granato 2007); 'they' adapt their cultural values in order to diminish cultural distance (Koopmans 2016); 'they' expand their relations with non-immigrants to enhance their bridging social capital (Tselios et al. 2015) and develop an integrated identification with the host country (Verkuyten & Martinovic 2012); etc.<sup>30</sup> By contrast, 'non-immigrants' are not regarded as integrating agents. They are only involved as part of an institutional structural context – the context which immigrants need to become an accepted part of.

One could object here that the strategies available to people who want to make the most of their lives in a new city or country are a valid topic of inquiry in and of themselves. Like Esser's framework, the literature on political opportunity structures (POS), for example, is primarily interested in how the structures of a receiving society affect the opportunities and behaviour of immigrants (e.g. Koopmans & Statham 2000). For these research approaches the receiving society is inevitably a context. This does not mean that they necessarily deny that non-immigrants *could be* agents in integration processes. Yet, this side of the process is simply not part of the research focus.

This is not a satisfying explanation. In the most optimistic interpretation of the problem, we are dealing with a structural bias of scholarly interest towards immigrants as agents in integration processes. The integration of non-immigrants would then be a research niche that simply needs more attention. Yet, I believe the problem to be more profound. These research endeavours do not even mention the notion of 'non-immigrants and their integration problem', or the possibility of non-immigrants as agents with 'integration strategies'. Neither do they feel the need to explain why they are focussing on the integration of immigrants, rather than non-immigrants. The choice seems self-explanatory, since the 'integration of non-immigrants' is not an issue.<sup>31</sup>

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30 Additionally, it is rarely explained how these forms of change on the side of immigrants would be theoretically relevant for our understanding of integration (recall the second analytical puzzle as introduced in chapter 1). I return to this point in chapters 4 and 6.

31 One may argue that a research focus on immigrants makes sense because of egalitarian concerns: immigrants hold a disadvantaged position in the comparison between immigrants and non-immigrants, and it is change in this disadvantaged position that researchers are interested in. I argue against such conceptions of equality, because they jeopardise a thorough understanding of how disadvantaged positions are constituted and maintained through relations amongst immigrants and non-immigrants. I further develop this argument in

Again, this is not to say that these research endeavours ignore the receiving society altogether, or do not hold 'non-immigrants' responsible for successful integration of 'immigrants'. Penninx and Garcés-Mascreñas (2016), for example, emphasize that the outcomes of integration processes are determined through the *interaction between* immigrants and the receiving society. They also explicitly state that the receiving society is actually more decisive for this outcome than immigrants, since they have more power and more resources (p.17). The non-immigrants' influence on the integration of immigrants is fully acknowledged here. However, in these approaches too, the integration of non-immigrants is not mentioned. Penninx and Garcés-Mascreñas define integration as 'the process of becoming an accepted part of society' (p.14). The integration problem here is that there are people who need to become an accepted part of society. Those who already are an accepted part of society are, by definition, not part of the integration problem.

Hence, in their approach too, integration is not fully understood as a two-way process: Immigrants need to integrate with non-immigrants, not the other way around. If immigrants do not identify with non-immigrants, immigrants have an integration problem. If non-immigrants do not identify with immigrants, it is still the immigrants with an integration problem. As a consequence, the issues of one-way integration as discussed in the previous section are not solved. We still find a tacit assumption that the non-immigrant does not integrate, and non-immigrants, as those who are already an accepted part of society, are still used as the benchmark for measuring integration. The distinction between 'people in need of integration' and 'people not in need of integration' is maintained and reiterated.

A classic example of this type of 'two-way approach' is provided by Portes and Rumbaut's (1990, 2001) theory on *modes of incorporation*. While they acknowledge the effects of government policy and discrimination on integration, their research focuses solely on how immigrants deal with these circumstances. Take, for example, their approach towards labour discrimination:

'the main difference [between immigrants] lies in the ability of different types of immigrants to neutralize labour discrimination'(1990 p. 87).

This focus on the immigrants' capacities to overcome problems of discrimination makes it seem like neutralizing labour discrimination is something immigrants *can do*. What is not mentioned, for example, is the difference made by the willingness of non-immigrants to stop discriminating against people on the labour market. As a consequence, we run into the infeasibility problem as described in 2.2: immigrants can simply not secure this form of social change by themselves. In later work, Portes and Rumbaut state that:

Once second-generation youths [of European descent] learned unaccented English, adopted American patterns of behavior and dress, and climbed a few rungs in the social ladder, they became by and large indistinguishable from the rest of the population (2001 p. 55).

Integration is portrayed as something that is attained once immigrants have sufficiently adapted. Yet, in these cases, the indistinguishability of second-generation youths has not been attained as a consequence of all references to Italian and Irish heritage having vanished from American society. What is not mentioned is that this was attained, partly, because certain patterns of behaviour and dress became accepted and acknowledged as American ways of behaving or dressing, and because identifying as Italian- or Irish-American was no longer seen as conflicting with a 'true American identity', allowing the salience of this ethnic identity to disappear to the background (Alba 2009 pp. 47–8). By solely focussing on the adaptation strategies and behaviours of immigrants, the authors risk implying – without necessarily intending to do so – that the attainment of integration depends on change on the side of immigrants alone.

A second framework that is interesting for this discussion is provided by Crul and Schneider's 'integration context theory' (2010; 2016). Importantly, their theory is less migrant-centred than most approaches. As a consequence of emerging 'super-diversity', they argue, non-migrants need to integrate too in some contexts:

The idea of assimilation or integration becomes at any rate more complex in a situation where there is no longer a clear majority group in which one is to integrate or assimilate (Crul 2016 p. 57).

This incorporation of literature on super-diversity opens up the possibility that not only immigrants, but also non-immigrants need to integrate.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, this does not make these approaches fully 'two-way': integration remains a process that is done by *outsiders*, be they immigrants or non-immigrants. In both instances, insiders and their institutions still only provide a context for integration processes: they do not integrate themselves.

A third relevant framework to be discussed is developed by Alba and his colleagues, who incorporate some ideas of a more relational understanding of integration. Alba endorses the idea that assimilation and integration are processes of boundary change in which ethnic distinction declines and 'the mainstream' expands. Alba and Nee (2003) use Shibutani & Kwan's (1965) theory of ethnic stratification, which focuses on ethnic differences as a social construction rather than an objective reality. In doing so, they emphasize that assimilation is to be understood primarily as a change in subjective status and the reduction of social difference, rather than a change in 'objective' socioeconomic status and the reduction of cultural difference. In the more historical parts of his work, Alba investigates which conditions led to 'boundary

32 In a way, their claim is similar to Bommes' statement that *every individual* needs to assimilate to a dominant structural order to competently participate in society (2012 p. 113).

relaxation' in post-war America, such that white ethnic immigrants could assimilate in large numbers (2009 p. 63). Hence, in researching the conditions for integration, he shifts focus from the change that migrants go through towards the change within the receiving society. In later work, he also acknowledges the importance of recognition as 'an insider' as a central element of the integration process, and points to the reciprocal character of bridging social capital (Alba & Foner 2015).

However, in Alba's integration theory, too, there is an underlying assumption that integration is a process for immigrants, which 'the mainstream', as he calls it, can influence but does not go through themselves. Thereby, at times, his work also reinforces the distinction between immigrants as agents and non-immigrants as part of a structural context:

[O]ne key to understanding trajectories of incorporation lies in the interplay between the *purposive action of immigrants* and their descendants and the contexts – that is institutional structures, cultural beliefs, and social networks, that shape it [my emphasis] (Alba & Nee 2003 p. 14).

Another example is when Alba and Nee state that the mainstream can be understood as 'structures of opportunity offering powerful incentives that make assimilation rewarding for many immigrants and their descendants' (Alba & Nee 2003 p. 14; see also Nee & Alba 2013). The implication here is that the mainstream does not have a problem in and of itself, and as such, does not assimilate.

A fourth body of potential 'two-way literature' is the research on 'white flight' and 'white avoidance'. These concepts originally stem from research in the US and refer to the inclination of white people to move away from, or avoid, neighbourhoods and schools with a high percentage of African-Americans or other ethnic minorities. White avoidance is found to be the most persistent mechanism in both the US and European context for sustaining segregated neighbourhoods and schools (Andersen 2017; BråmÅ 2006; Quillian 2002). In contrast to most research on integration, this body of literature does actually take into account the *behaviour* of insiders, because 'private choices have public consequences' (Saporito 2003). Yet, again, it focuses on the effect of spatial segregation on the integration of migrants (see e.g. the special issue by Bolt, Özüekren, & Phillips (2010))— white flight is not depicted as an intrinsic integration problem in and of itself.

In criticizing this second conceptualization of two-way integration, my point is not that observations about the positions of migrants, such as 'less cultural distance correlates with better labor market positions' (Koopmans 2016) or that 'host societies provide powerful incentives to make assimilation rewarding' (Alba & Nee 2003), are empirically unsound. Nor do I claim that education or identification are of no importance at all when it comes to investigating integration.

My point is however, that such empirical observations are not 'neutral', and can still reinforce a normatively undesirable understanding of integration. By (tacitly) endorsing the integration dispensation for non-immigrants, these approaches are incapable of really moving away from the problems of one-wayness as discussed 2.2. Since the 'integratedness' of non-immigrants and the receiving society is not an issue, the implicit implication is that they are somehow already integrated. Similarly, by adhering to a conception of integration in which 'immigrants integrate into a society', one risks depicting society as a benchmark for integration and a prescriptive example, something that immigrants would need to live up to.

Moreover, the inevitable result of such conceptions of integration is an inherent distinction between 'people who integrate' and 'people for whom integration is not an issue'. As long as integration is conceptualized as a process in which only immigrants integrate, 'they' remain the site of the integration problem. The general problem of integration is portrayed as the problem of 'unintegrated migrants' who yet need to be integrated in a society. All in all, therefore, I argue that this approach to two-way integration does not suffice if we truly want to move away from one-way understandings of integration, and the ways in which they reinforce civic integrationism as a discourse.

### 2.3.3 *People integrate with each other*

The last option is to conceive of integration as a relational process in which the members of society, a collection of immigrants and non-immigrants, integrate with each other. This entails that non-immigrants do not just influence the process, but *are an intrinsic part of it*. Ending discrimination or other practices of social closure is not perceived as instrumental to the integration of immigrants: it is integration in itself. In this approach the 'integration dispensation' is lifted: the distinction between 'people who need to integrate', and 'people for whom integration is not an issue' does not hold. As such, it does not make sense to talk about immigrants integrating *into* a society – integration as a process takes place between people within a society. The approach thereby reduces the risk of both depicting society as a harmonious whole that is already integrated, and as a prescriptive norm to which 'people who integrate' need to live up to. Consequently, there is less of a risk of portraying 'non-immigrants' as the norm, and 'immigrants' as somehow defective. It is therefore the only two-way conceptualization that can avoid the one-way problems of undesirability and infeasibility.

This relational approach is by far the least common approach towards two-way integration. As indicated above, Richard Alba's work does lean towards it. Further, we find some useful socio-psychological literature on the attitudes and preferences of natives when it comes to interethnic contact and integration (see e.g. Kopic et al. 2012; Martinović 2013). Yet this literature focuses mainly on the determinants of individual behaviour, rather than on integration as a collective process (see also Elias & Scotson 1994 p. xx).

Elizabeth Anderson (2010) is one of the few scholars to systematically use such a relational conceptualization of integration:

Integration does not view disadvantaged communities as the only ones that need to change. Integration aims to transform the habits of dominant groups. It is a tool for breaking down stigmatization, stereotypes, and discrimination (pp. 115-6).

Anderson's work, which is embedded in her broader theoretical framework of relational equality, does not focus on integration in a migration context, but on the integration between the black and white population in the US. This means there is still a need to further develop this notion of relational integration in the context of immigration. I use Anderson's work in chapter 5, where I further outline my conception of relational integration.

A second author taking on a relational understanding of integration in a migration context is Jiménez, in his 2017 work on *relational assimilation*:

Relational assimilation involves back-and-forth adjustments in daily life by both newcomers and established individuals as they come into contact with one another. This volley of back-and-forth adjustments starts off with rapid intensity as new arrivals and established individuals first meet, and it gradually moderates over time (often across generations), as a working consensus around ethnic, racial, and national belonging develops. When considered side by side, the processes of established and newcomer adjustment are mirror images: both parties feel a tremendous sense of loss, often longing for the way things were; both also feel a sense of gain because of the dynamism that migration can produce. But the deliberate and incidental adjustments that established and newcomer individuals make are more than just mirror images—they implicate each other (p. 11).

In Jiménez's approach, the change amongst non-immigrants is not a factor that could potentially affect the assimilation of immigrants, but is an intrinsic and essential part of the integration process in and of itself. He also emphasizes that 'immigrants' and 'non-immigrants' should not be isolated from each other when analysing these processes: relational assimilation concerns the ways in which people act and react towards one another. Jimenez's approach is very empirically minded and, unfortunately, he does not provide a thorough theoretical account of what relational assimilation exactly entails, except for 'people becoming more familiar' (p.10). As such, he provides no normative account for why we should care about the process in the first place, or a differentiation between problematic and unproblematic forms of '(un)familiarity'.<sup>33</sup> Still, his approach shows that a more relational approach to (empirical) integration studies is possible.

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33 I provide further arguments for why we would need such a normative account in chapter 5.

## 2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown how the notion of the two-way process has remained under-theorized. In its most dominant use, the role of the receiving society is seen as an external factor, which can *influence* the integration of immigrants. It thereby does not give an account of how the receiving society is part and parcel of the integration problem—the integration dispensation is not problematized on a conceptual level, and the integration problem is still sited with the immigrant. As such, I have argued, it is inept as a solution for the problems of one-wayness that it was supposed to solve in the first place.

The analysis as presented in this chapter both reinforces my call for a reconceptualization of integration in which the role of the receiving society is consistently theorized (puzzle 1 as presented in the introduction), as well as providing a first direction towards such a reconceptualization. The understanding of a two-way process as a process in which people integrate with each other points in the direction of a relational understanding of integration, in which we depart from an understanding in which some people need to integrate into a society. The idea of people ‘integrating with each other’ implies an understanding of integration in which everyone in a society is intrinsically involved, such that the integration problem is a problem that is situated amongst these people in a society, rather than a problem that is first and foremost situated in the immigrant.<sup>34</sup>

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34 The expression ‘integration amongst people’ is not commonly used—at least not in the context of integration and migration—and may thus seem awkward at first. Almost without exception, politicians, social commentators and scholars speak of integration as an issue of immigrants who integrate into society. In other research fields, however, this way of formulating seems to be common practice: In political science, ‘European integration’ refers to the integration amongst countries of the European Union (see e.g. ‘The Journal of European Integration’). In organization studies and business administration, ‘post-merger integration’ concerns the integration between two businesses after having merged together (Vaara 2002). In racial studies, ‘racial integration’ denotes the integration amongst people of different racial categories, like for example the integration between black and white Americans (Freixas & Abbott 2019). Similarly, I argue that should we be speaking of integration amongst people in the context of immigration.



# Chapter 3



The 'Participation Paradox'

### 3.1 Introduction <sup>35</sup>

This chapter addresses what we call a ‘participation paradox’, which emerges from the ambivalent attitudes in European integration discourses towards the political participation of immigrants. In this discourse, immigrant participation is both demanded and feared. On the one hand it is demanded that immigrants perform as ‘active citizens’: citizens who are willing to put in effort, who feel engaged with issues of the public good, and who respect the institutions and values of the receiving society. On the other hand, claims are made implying that society *as it is*, with its proclaimed progressive liberal democratic values, needs to be defended against immigrant participation: when immigrants participate politically, they might constitute illiberal, undesirable change.

The aim of this chapter is twofold. First, it aims to show how this ambivalence towards immigrant participation constitutes the parameters for the political participation of people with a migration background, thereby affecting their democratic position within the polity.<sup>36</sup> In the interplay between the demand for and fear of participation, a specific image of the ‘good and civic’ active immigrant is constructed. Within this specific understanding of ‘civicness’, these individuals are not allowed to participate in the democratic polity as full democratic subjects who are free to voice their interests and perspectives. Instead, their participation serves as a *tool* for them to become ‘civic’, which means to be active and engaged, reinforcing the alleged status quo of liberal progressiveness.

Second, this chapter aims to provide an illustration of how many conventional conceptions of (political) integration are missing the point of what constitutes an ‘integration problem’, by only focussing on the ‘integration of immigrants’. The political inclusion of newcomers and settled immigrants is a flourishing research area, focusing on various forms of immigrant participation (Bloemraad & Vermeulen 2014; Marciniak & Tyler 2014; Shinozaki 2015), as well as questions of political trust and identification (Maxwell 2010; Morales & Giugni 2016). In doing so, it provides important insights into whether, and under what circumstances, people with a migration background participate politically in their (new) polities.

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<sup>35</sup> This chapter is based on Klarenbeek, L. M., & Weide, M. (2020). ‘The Participation Paradox. Demand for and Fear of Immigrant Participation’, *Critical Policy Studies*, 14/2: 214–32. Since it comprises a joint work, I use the pronoun ‘we’ in this chapter.

<sup>36</sup> Note that throughout the chapter, we use the term ‘immigrant’ when describing a policy or mechanism that applies to various categories of people with a migration background. This choice is a pragmatic one, and we do acknowledge that the paradox affects these various categories in different ways. Depending on formal status and social standing, both the expectations of participation and the actual opportunity to participate differ. When necessary, we use more specific terms. A distinction is made between newly arrived immigrants, resident foreigners (foreign citizens who hold a residency permit and are registered in a municipality), naturalized citizens with a migration background, and their offspring. Danish policies and debates around active citizenship, which we draw on for the empirical part of the article, operate with the categories of ‘Western’ and ‘non-Western’ immigrants, the latter of which is also used as a euphemism when actually wanting to speak about Muslims.

Our analysis shifts the perspective on political integration away from the immigrant, and starts from the receiving society instead. In doing so, we suggest that more immigrant participation does not automatically imply more integration. On the contrary, imagined, anticipated, or real political claims may be used as proof of how different people with a migration background are, and how their incorporation into society is actually failing (see also Verkuyten 2018). Unless resident foreigners, naturalized citizens and their children are discursively acknowledged as equals in terms of their social standing as participants, 'participation' and 'democracy' can amount to little more than tools of discursive othering.<sup>37</sup> Critical scrutiny of the discursive contexts of participation can therefore contribute to better understanding of the preconditions within which participation unfolds, and what constitutes the core of a problem of political integration.

This chapter consists of three parts. First, we establish the existence of the participation paradox. We start by discussing the specific characteristics of the civic integrationist discourse that constitute the paradox: demand for and fear of participation. We then illustrate the paradox by analysing the Danish 'Declaration for Integration and Active Citizenship', adopted in 2006 (Ministeriet for Flygtninge [...] 2006; Udlændinge[...]ministeriet 2017). This is a street-level policy tool operated by municipal caseworkers that quite explicitly combines both elements of the paradox.

In the second part we explore how the interplay between fear and demand plays out in practice. Using illustrations from the Danish immigrant incorporation discourse, we distinguish two different mechanisms: the discouragement of participation (3.1) and the conditioning of participation (3.2). The first primarily applies to resident foreigners; the latter to both resident foreigners and naturalized citizens and their children. In section 3.1, the case of local and regional electoral rights for third-country nationals is discussed based on parliamentary debates and associated legislative documents, dating from the period 2010–2012 (Folketinget 2010a, b, c, 2012a, b, c, d, 2017a, b). In section 3.2, educational materials are used to illustrate the conditioning of the contents of legitimate political speech (Kulturministeriet 2016a, b, c; Ministeriet for Flygtninge [...] 2002, 2007a, b, 2011; Udlændinge[...]ministeriet 2016a, b; Undervisningsministeriet 2014). These materials represent what is deemed essential by the incorporation regime for a newcomer to the country to know and accept. Most of the materials are book-format self-study publications for preparing for citizenship exams (either for permanent residence or naturalization). The Denmark Canon, however, is directed at young people in general. Lastly, we use the official introductory film for newcomers, 'A Life in Denmark' (Feldballe Film & TV 2010). The documents used for the illustrations are listed separately in appendix 3.1.

Finally, we discuss three implications of these mechanisms in terms of the construction

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<sup>37</sup> In chapter 5, I refer to such practices as the questioning of the legitimacy of the immigrants' membership.

of 'civicness,' and their implications for the democratic position of individuals with a migration background.

### 3.1.2 *Introducing the Danish case*

We use illustrations from the Danish integration discourse to establish the characteristics of the paradox and to explore how it works in practice. Before we explicate the paradox any further, we first introduce the materials we have analysed. The Danish context of immigrant incorporation provides interesting material for researching the paradox as the country boasts relatively strong norms of active citizenship norms for all its citizens.<sup>38</sup> It is therefore not surprising that we find very explicit policies of 'active citizenship' that actively encourage migrants to participate in society and in Danish democracy (Mouritsen 2013). At the same time, nationalism and vocal opposition to immigrants is growing, and Denmark is developing ever more stringent policies against newcomers as well as resident foreigners (Ersbøll 2013 pp. 7, 22–3; Gammeltoft-Hansen 2017 p. 105; Stokes-Dupass 2017).

Both the demand for participation and the fear of participation are thus clearly present in the Danish policy discourse, enabling us to demonstrate the key elements of the paradox. The selected empirical materials serve this specific purpose, and we do not claim that they present a holistic country case. At the same time we do not wish to imply that the participation paradox is an exclusively Danish phenomenon. We expect similar situations in other European countries, such as the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Germany, where there are similar discourses and an increasing emphasis on active citizenship.

The incorporation of newcomers gained political momentum in Denmark at the end of the previous century. In 1998, the first Integration Act was adopted by the then Social Democratic (SD) government. After the 2001 general elections, which led to a Liberal-Conservative (L-C) government supported by the Danish People's Party (DPP), legislation in this area started intensifying (see Gammeltoft-Hansen 2017, p. 102).<sup>39</sup> Since then, policymaking in the area has increasingly been characterized by restrictions and tightening (with a short period of slight relaxation under SD rule in 2011–2014). While many policy restrictions have been attributed to the DPP, pivotal in most parliamentary compositions since 2001, the SD has also often supported the L-C government's incorporation policy bills as the main opposition party (Green-Pedersen & Otjes 2019; Jønsson & Petersen. 2010 p. 205).

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<sup>38</sup> Bolzendahl and Coffé (2013), for example, show in their cross-national comparative research on citizenship norms that 92% of the Danish population thinks it is important for citizens to vote, and about 60% of Danes are involved in some form of political activism (see also Oser & Hooghe 2018; Sloam 2016). These are relatively high numbers in comparison to other EU countries.

<sup>39</sup> Jønsson and Petersen (2010) assert that the 2001 elections did not represent a 'breaking point' in immigration and incorporation policy-making, but rather a step in the direction in which the politics of integration were already heading. Yet, the elections mark some kind of change: the DPP grew from 13 to 22 seats out of a total of 179, and cemented immigration issues onto the political agenda.

The empirical material is comprised of 22 public documents: parliamentary debates, administrative documents, and educational publications. Together, they span a period of approximately ten years, from 2006 to 2017. The materials mainly reflect the positions of the biggest parties represented in the Danish parliament that were in government or supporting it at that time (the Liberals, the Conservatives, the Danish People's Party, and the Social Democrats). The documents are closely related to civic integration policy measures (Freeman et al. 2016 p. 346). At the same time, these texts also serve other purposes than actual incorporation policy: addressing the majority Danes' perceived concerns around migration, they have symbolic and expressive value (see Slaven & Boswell 2018).

We selected the material based on its illustrative quality and authoritative position. Our aim was to look for examples that illustrated the mechanism in itself as clearly as possible, rather than compiling a broad sample to make claims about the range of the phenomenon. While doing so, we selected different types of materials, representing different aspects of political discourse: parliamentary debate, and government communications towards immigrants and towards society as a whole. All of the selected materials have an authoritative character through their intimate link to institutional – legislative, executive or administrative – power.

The public documents were analysed through critical close reading, inspired by the tools of discourse analysis and analysis of categories (Jokinen et al. 2012; Potter 1996; Reisigl & Wodak. 2001). In the case of longer text documents, the relevant passages were identified by skimming and searches. The content of the text, i.e. what was said, was then scrutinized, including vocabulary and categories applied, attributes attached to them, as well as assumptions implied by these (conscious or unconscious) choices. Reflecting on the unsaid, the (consciously or unconsciously) excluded alternatives, was also an important part of the reading.

### **3.2 Civic integrationism and the participation paradox: demand for and fear of immigrant participation**

The participation paradox is constituted within debates on immigrant incorporation, diversity and citizenship in Europe. As discussed in the introduction, this is generally denoted as the civic integrationist discourse.

Several scholars have pointed out ambivalences in discourses and policies of civic integration. While such policies and discourses formally have an inclusive goal, they often have exclusionary consequences (Bonjour & Duyvendak 2018; Korteweg 2017; Kostakopoulou 2010; Schrover & Schinkel 2013). With regard to debates around 'active citizenship', several researchers have addressed the strong focus on proclaimed 'liberal' values, and the irony of enforcing liberal values upon people (Mouritsen & Olsen 2013; Triadafilopoulos 2011). Taking on board these critical analyses of general inclusion, exclusion and (il)liberalism, we want to add to this critical

literature by turning our focus towards the portrayal of democratic participation within this civic integrationist discourse.

The first characteristic of civic integrationism we highlight for the participation paradox is its call for the 'active citizen' (e.g. the Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy [Commission of the European Communities 2005]). This ideal of active citizenship, with its specific emphasis on fostering 'civicness', has become inseparably intertwined with the notion of integration: active citizenship is presented as *the* road towards integration, and in some cases, even presented as a condition for acquiring legal citizenship in the first place (Van Houdt et al. 2011). Instances of this call for integration through active citizenship can be found in several national contexts, expressed in policy briefs<sup>40</sup> and phenomena such as the 'Republican Integration Contract' in France, and the 'Declaration of Participation' for newcomers in the Netherlands.

Civic integrationism thereby implies a distinction between legal citizens, who are citizens in name only, and active citizens, who are considered to be 'real citizens'. Citizenship is portrayed as a virtue of 'civicness', which prescribes a notion of feeling engaged with the national community, feeling responsible for its wellbeing, and acting upon these feelings through 'active citizenship' (Schinkel 2010). Because the conduct of 'the active citizen' is juxtaposed against those who are not considered to be 'real citizens', the idea of 'the active citizen' is inherently orientated towards the preservation of the polity as it is (Isin 2009).

As noted by Schinkel (2010 p. 272), one of the consequences of this separation between the formal and the 'real' citizen is that the call for active citizenship can be applied both to newly arrived migrants, who may (or may not) apply for citizenship or permanent residence, and to people with a migration background, who may already have formal citizenship, but whose 'civicness' is questioned. The participation paradox thus also concerns both the participation of resident foreigners, who do not (yet) have full participation rights, and citizens, who do have formal rights but whose legitimacy as participants in the polity is questioned.

The second pillar of the participation paradox is the call for protection of liberal democratic values and institutions. While active citizenship is encouraged, the discourse also exposes a general fear of cultural incompatibility, embodied by newcomers who may abuse the tolerance and openness of 'Western' societies, and who may bring about (illiberal) change in these societies through their participation (Kundnani 2012 pp. 157–8). Specifically, themes such as gender equality or the emancipation of the LGBTQ+ community are projected as progressive

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40 To give two examples: The 2007 Dutch policy brief on integration ('Make Sure You Are Part of It!') states that active citizenship is a 'vital part of the integration process', portraying active citizens as those who identify with Dutch society and are willing to contribute to looking after common interests (Ministerie van VROM 2007 p. 17,37). In the UK it is expected that migrants voluntarily participate in community-building initiatives (Cheong et al. 2007). In 2008, the UK Home Office even issued a plan for migrants to earn points through active citizenship, in order to speed up their naturalization process. Although this plan was not brought into practice, it shows what kind of consequences could be attached to 'active citizenship' (Kostakopoulou 2010; UK Border Agency 2008).

achievements which need to be protected against intolerance and illiberalism.

The demand and fear sides of the participation paradox are not just logically conflicting, but also potentially mutually reinforcing. The perceived threat of 'the wrong kind of participation' reinforces the demand for people with a migratory background to be 'good citizens' by performing democratic citizenship. Rather than containing the demand for active citizenship, the fear of participation actually seems to give the discussion on active citizenship more salience.

The case of the Danish Declaration of Integration and Active Citizenship crystallizes the tendency towards simultaneous demand for and fear of immigrants' agency, allowing us to show the presence of the paradox empirically. The declaration was first introduced in 2006 and the text has remained almost the same since. It is a tool for acquiring an individual's recognition of the 'fundamental values of the Danish society' (Ministeriet for Flygtninge [...] 2006, 10; Udlændinge[...]ministeriet 2017).<sup>41</sup> As such, it is part of the obligatory paperwork that municipal caseworkers process; the declaration is signed by newcomers when entering the municipal system of integration services. Hence, it applies to those foreign citizens residing in Denmark who come into contact with the incorporation regime – generally due to unemployment or another type of dependency on social benefits. Those who are economically independent may nonetheless face the declaration later on, since signing it is part of the basic requirements for the permanent resident permit.<sup>42</sup>

By signing the approx. two-page document, individual migrants confirm that they *know, understand, and accept* fifteen statements. On the affirmative side, these points cover five themes: 1) respect for 'Danish democratic principles' and law; 2) a willingness to respect and act upon the rights and freedoms defined as fundamental for Danish society; 3) a willingness to be educated and collaborate with public institutions; 4) economic self-sufficiency; and 5) allegiance to norms of gender equality. On the renouncing side, we find three themes. These pertain to refraining from: 1) discrimination; 2) activities threatening national security; and 3) illiberal family practices. The second and third themes particularly resonate with the defensive narrative of the civic integrationist discourse. Prospective citizens need to declare that they understand and accept that they must not engage in violence and criminal activities, endorse terrorism, or engage in illiberal practices.

These contents prescribe clear demands for various types of participatory action by the signatory. It is also possible to read the statements as a list of potential, suspected failures that the declaration, or the incorporation policy in general, hopes to prevent. The declaration makes visible the dynamic relationship between the demand for agency and the fear of its

<sup>41</sup> The quotations from the empirical material are translations from Danish by the authors unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>42</sup> There are exceptions to the basic framework. Most significantly, nationals of EU/EEC countries and Switzerland enjoy a lighter set of criteria where the declaration is not included (The Danish Immigration Service 2018).

uncontrolled unfolding: the perceived threat informs the formulation of meticulous activity goals to be performed by the newcomers.

Active citizenship, as portrayed in the *Declaration*, is directed towards maintaining and reproducing the (alleged) status quo (see also Isin & Nyers 2014 p. 5). The various actions required of the signatory are framed as important for the sake of the preservation of society as it allegedly is, thereby constituting a very specific prescription of 'desired civicness'. Being part of society is not presented in the light of getting one's preferences heard or contributing to societal development and change. The right to take part in 'democratic processes' is subsumed under the topic of men and women's equal rights and responsibilities. These processes are not explained or exemplified in the declaration text itself. The text furthermore omits any references to the possibility of obtaining Danish citizenship that endows one with full political rights.

A second point worth mentioning is how the imagined addressee of the text takes the figure of the Muslim Other. The illiberal practices renounced in the declaration are commonly associated with stereotypes about traditionalist or fundamentalist Muslims such as 'coercion against one's spouse', 'the use of force to contract marriage', the 'circumcision of girls' [*original English quotes*] as well as terrorist acts (the text has been specifically extended over the years on the latter). Since it is the Muslim Other that is the primary source of the fear side of the participation paradox, the demand for active citizenship is primarily shaping an idea of the good, active Muslim immigrant.

### 3.2.1. *The participation paradox at work: debates on the desirability and conditions of immigrant participation*

This interplay between demand for and fear of active participation of immigrants in European polities has implications for the parameters within which immigrants get the chance to participate. In this sub-section, we discuss two different ways in which the participation paradox plays out. The first concerns the overall desirability of participation of resident foreigners. We showcase a debate between those who state that *participation is desirable as a tool for integration*, and those who depict *integration as a condition for participation*. Here, demand and fear are explicit opposites. The second involves a dynamic in which the fear of participation reinforces the demand for 'civic' participation, thereby dealing with the conditions set to the *content* of political participation. These conditions apply to resident foreigners as well as naturalized citizens and their children. Both examples underline our point about the challenges to the equality of the premises for political participation in the Danish context.

### 3.2.2 *Debating the desirability of electoral participation of third-country nationals*

In 2010, the then pivotal Danish People's Party made an agreement with the Liberal-Conservative government about a number of changes to immigrant and integration policy. This package included raising foreign nationals' residence time in Denmark before being eligible to vote in

municipal and regional elections from three to four years, except for EU and Nordic citizens (Folketinget 2010c).

The parliamentary debate on this issue unfolded around three main positions (Folketinget 2010a). The left opposed the extension of the residence time as an impairment of democracy. The government parties blamed the DPP for requiring the amendment to be part of the package. One Conservative MP distanced himself from the amendment, stating ‘it is not a flower that grew in our garden’ (Naser Khader in Folketinget 2010a, 18). The DPP, for its part, favoured abolishing the right of resident foreigners to vote altogether.

In the government bill (Folketinget 2010b, 21), the only direct justification for the proposed amendment was to ensure that third-country nationals would not be eligible to vote in local elections before fulfilling the residence time criterion for a permanent residence permit—four years of uninterrupted, documented residence. This discursive coupling of the electoral and residence permit rights was, however, rather arbitrary and did not establish a legal bond. The new, broadened and sharpened set of criteria for permanent residence ensured that, according to the Danish Institute for Human Rights, many potential applicants would not qualify after four years, or ever (Institut for Menneskerettigheder 2010). Yet, irrespective of the type of their residence permit, adult residence foreigners would be eligible to vote after the required time of four years had passed.

The bill did not explicitly justify why and how the additional time would enhance newcomers’ capabilities of participating in the Danish polity. Instead, emphasis was on the demonstration of citizenship before gaining eligibility. By discursively connecting the residence permit regime and stressing the notion of ‘making an effort’ to gain electoral rights, the government seemed to imply that making electoral rights *conditional* upon performance (similar to permanent residence) could be desirable (see also De Waal 2017):

The proposal is furthermore connected with the initiatives in the agreement [between the Government and the DPP] for the promotion of integration and civic citizenship, and underlining the responsibility of the individual foreigner for becoming integrated in Denmark. The proposal should therefore be seen against the background of a wish that the individual foreigner makes an effort to be integrated and to demonstrate civic citizenship (Folketinget 2010b, 21).

The decision to prolong the residence requirement for eligibility in subnational elections was reversed in 2012 after the government’s composition had changed (Folketinget 2012d). As elections were held in 2009 and 2013, the four-year rule was never implemented.

The parliamentary debate that unfolded around the reversal only partly followed the positions familiar from 2010. The Conservatives and Liberals, who back in 2010 had expressed support for the restriction, mostly due to give-and-take negotiating with the DPP, now explicitly defended the 4-year rule. The SD-led government now argued that voting was *beneficial for*

*integration*, adopting a more instrumental approach to democracy than in the 2010 debate where foreign residents' voting rights were seen as indicative of the status of Danish democracy. This time round, electoral rights were framed as 'strengthening the possibilities of *foreigners* to participate actively in *our* democracy' (Jacob Bjerregaard [SD] in Folketinget 2012a, 29, emphasis added), and increasing 'opportunities for immigrants to be a part of the debate on integration in their municipality' (Anne Baastrup [Socialist People's Party] in Folketinget 2012a, 32). These framings do not reflect an idea of equality of democratic subjects, but rather uphold a division between the foreign element that is allowed in *our* democracy, even predetermining the subject matter for the foreigners' contribution: their own adaptation into Danish society.

The DPP meanwhile submitted an amendment that would have abolished resident foreigners' voting rights, except Nordic citizens (Folketinget 2012b, 14), and if that failed, an amendment making the gaining of electoral rights conditional upon passing a high-level Danish language test (Folketinget 2012c).<sup>43</sup> By seeking to limit all electoral rights to Danish citizens, combined with the preference for stricter naturalization requirements and a lower number of naturalizations than supported by other parties (see Folketinget 2017a, 5, 2017b, 1), the stance of the DPP comes extremely close to saying only ethnic Danes belong to the polity. The opposition to the naturalization of individuals with a refugee background (Folketinget 2017a, 5) (the majority of whom belong to groups socially constructed as 'non-white'), together with allowing an exception for other Nordic citizens (who are considered 'white') in the amendment for voting rights, make the racialized character of the DPP's approach discernible (Loftsdóttir & Jensen 2012).<sup>44</sup>

The status at the time of writing, 2018, is that the three-year rule has survived despite the Liberal-Conservative regime's return to power in 2015. The issue is however not forgotten. 'The New Right', a splinter party from the Conservatives with representation in one municipal council since 2017, made it onto the public broadcasting company's (DR) news on 12 October 2017 by claiming that resident foreigners should be barred from voting in subnational elections due to the potential influence of letting a 'few foreigners decide'. In this line of argument, we clearly see the fear of immigrant participation being reflected.

To sum up: there is clear pressure from right-wing political actors to exclude resident foreigners

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43 A similar measure was proposed by the Dutch conservative-Christian (CDA) and conservative-liberal (VVD) (government) parties in July 2018: according to their proposal, resident foreigners should only be eligible to vote in local elections if they pass the knowledge and language test required for a permanent residence permit (CDA 2018).

44 Over time and in different democracies, a variety of requirements have limited people's access to electoral rights related to, for example, wealth, gender and race (see Carl Henrik Jørgen, and Svend-Erik 2016, Free 2015). Today, limitations mainly relate to mental illness, criminal offences and specific professions (e.g. judge, military officer) (Piccoli et al. 2017). A requirement of documented language proficiency echoes the historical, oppressive rules like the literacy tests in the US that were upheld in order to keep people of colour disenfranchised (Karlson 1997).

from electoral influence. For the DPP, the fear of political participation is so central that it nullifies the demand for participation in the polity. Full assimilation in other spheres of life, expressed for instance as people 'being Danish at the bottom of their heart' (Jeppe Jakobsen [DDP] in Folketinget 2017a, 5), is portrayed as *a condition for any right to participate*. The L-C government too holds that the right to participate should only be granted to those who, in their perception, are already integrated up to a certain degree. Both the DDP and the L-C government accepted or promoted stricter criteria to bar 'excessively easy' access to electoral participation. Even though left-wing actors defended the electoral rights of resident foreigners, these rights were mainly presented as a tool for integration. As a consequence, the political participation of immigrants is primarily constructed as an integration issue, rather than something concerning the Danish democracy as such (only mentioned by the opposition in the 2010 debate).

### 3.2.3. *Conditioning political participation: the favoured position of Christianity*

In addition to these debates about the overall desirability of resident foreigners' participation, the participation paradox is also constituted in discourse and policies around the *content* of desirable participation. In these cases, the fear of 'wrongful participation' leads to attempts to impose conditions for what counts as good, 'integrative' participation.<sup>45</sup> We acknowledge that the social norms of a political culture will always skew access to effective participation in favour of those most thoroughly socialized within it; adopting the formal as well as the informal 'rules of the game' is vital for political participation. Our point, however, is to highlight an inconsistency in which topics are off limits within the Danish 'rules of the game'.

Here, we discuss the discursive conditions for the participation of Muslims, as opposed to Christians or secular citizens. Muslims are heavily othered in Danish society (Andreassen 2005; Sheik & Crone 2011), which tends to portray itself as a secular nation (Larsen 2010; Mouritsen 2017 p. 293). In this sub-section, we show how condemning faith-related politics is effectively communicated to the general public and to people with a migration background in particular. Presenting religious language, perspectives, and interests as unacceptable in politics (which, in the wider sense, covers all public discussion), the good citizen is portrayed as someone who would not use democratic institutions for making claims motivated by faith.

Although religiosity and religiously motivated claims have been deprecated as alien to Danish political culture in the 21st century, the distinction between religion and politics is far from simple: the country's constitution stipulates a state-church system (§4) and there is a tradition of clerics of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran state church being involved in politics, as well as politicians making statements on religious issues (Larsen 2010; Mouritsen

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45 This seems to be a similar mechanism to the one observed by Dahlstedt (2008, 499). He shows how, in the Swedish context, 'mobilizing one's resources' was deemed highly desirable as a policy goal, but those resources were only perceived as constructive if not diverging from the imagined 'Swedish normality'. This 'normality' refers to social norms and language skills, linked to a historical continuum of exclusion on ethnic grounds.

2017 p. 293). Especially the parties on the right have positioned themselves positively towards Christianity, framing it as a characteristic feature of the nation and source of national cohesion – irrespective of the fact that most voters do not define their national belonging in terms of Christianity (Lüchau 2011). It seems that it is *religiosity* (faith) much more than *religion* (a socio-cultural institution) that is shunned in Danish politics, and Islam to a much higher degree than Christianity (Lindberg 2014; Lüchau 2011).

In 2016, the Ministry of Culture published educational material on Danish immaterial culture – ‘The Denmark Canon: 10 Values for the Future Society’ (Kulturministeriet 2016a).<sup>46</sup> It follows a tradition of Canons published by Liberal-Conservative governments to address and fortify the idea of ‘Danishness’ against the perceived threats of multiculturalism and fundamentalism through compiling texts that crystallize the essence of the topic (e.g. the Culture Canon launched in 2006) (see Sheik & Crone 2011 pp. 175–6). Our discussion of the Canon focuses on the main publication of the list of ten values and the justification of the project.

The overall purpose of the Denmark Canon is to enlighten and engage. The aim was that through the canon process we would achieve a greater awareness of our cultural heritage. That which has made us who we are, and the value patterns and traditions that we adopt (...) which we believe in and apply when raising our children. (...) In the long term, such awareness can (...) prepare the ground for better integration – including that of non-ethnic Danish citizens. (...) The purpose of the canon is also to make it clearer what creates our national identity and cohesion (...) and make us a people of increased cultural awareness and common cultural experience (Kulturministeriet 2016b, English original).

‘The Christian cultural tradition’ made it into the final ten Canon elements (Kulturministeriet 2016a, 10). Its depiction in the canon text makes visible the complicated relationship between state, politics and Christianity/religion: it is noted that the church and state are linked through the constitution; that the state remains secular in its legislation; *that religious arguments are not socially accepted in political debates, or conversely, political statements in sermons*; and nonetheless that the parliamentary term always opens with a service in church. The constitution is presented as guaranteeing ‘freedom of religion but not the equality of religions’ (Ibid.).

The Danish language presentation webpage about the Canon quoted the Minister of Culture Bertel Haarder’s Facebook post explaining that the initiative was (also) about making clear ‘what is incompatible with life here’. He maintained that: ‘We must not withdraw [from our own cultural practices] just because some arrive here with another type of foundation (...) Most Muslims are happy to let their children participate in Christianity lessons, the Christmas service and singing of hymns [in schools]. They have nothing against the fact that Denmark

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<sup>46</sup> Title directly translated from Danish. The official English language title is ‘Denmark Canon: What Makes us Who We Are’.

is a Christian country' (Kulturministeriet 2016c). Underlying this statement is an idea that it is perfectly defensible to demarcate Denmark as a Christian country and that most Muslims (the 'good Muslims') would not want to make any (political) claim to change this. This can also be read as a normative statement, discursively marginalizing those who actually would like to have a critical say, for example about the above-mentioned school practices. Desired participation, as in the case of the *Declaration* before, is framed as taking part in what is presented as the status quo (here celebrating Christmas, singing hymns); proposing changes is implied to be undesired, i.e. the kind of participation that does not amount to integration.

The Canon project aimed for a broad outreach, especially through schools. A more immigrant-specific side to this civic education by the government is found in the vast range of brochures and self-study materials about Denmark. The same negation of religious political speech is found in these documents. The self-study materials for the official tests for a permanent residence permit and naturalization can be deemed the most powerful of these text policy tools, as the test aspirants need to know the material very well in order to succeed in the multiple-choice test.

The self-study materials for these tests educate the reader about the social norm of keeping religion away from the public sphere:

'Although the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark is supported by the state, it has no political power. There is a tradition for drawing a clear line between religion and politics. Most Danes consider religion a private matter' (Udlændinge[...]ministeriet 2016b, 84).

Equivalent passages with only marginal variation are found in all five editions of the study materials since 2007 as well as in the film 'Life in Denmark' (Feldballe Film & TV 2010, 7:47–8:20; Ministeriet for Flygtninge [...] 2007a, 78, 2011, 79; Udlændinge[...]ministeriet 2016a, 66; Undervisningsministeriet 2014, 83).<sup>47</sup> The wordings are notably similar to that in the Canon, implying a rather fixed state rhetoric around this issue. Through the link to the tests, being aware of (and desirably also accepting) the exclusion of religious reasoning from politics is made part of the conditions for gaining a more permanent status or full citizenship in the country. Yet, political claims about the Christian nature of Danish society seem to be fully acceptable.

These endeavours to secure Denmark as a secular-Christian polity illustrate how the fear of 'wrongful' participation construes a specific picture of the kind of 'civiness' to be attained through active citizenship: both newcomers and naturalized citizens need to participate to integrate, but not just any participation will do. Islamic rhetoric and claims fall outside the parameters of 'integrative participation', and are therefore deemed illegitimate. A discursive

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<sup>47</sup> However, a widely distributed handbook from the time before the test system does not contain this passage, merely linking the state church system to public service production (Ministeriet for Flygtninge [...] 2002, 103, 2007b, 127).

restriction like this stands in stark contrast with the emphasis on the value of freedom of expression. According to Larsen (Larsen 2014 p. 206), “being blasphemous” is even widely presented as an intrinsic part of Danish culture and society’. In other words: faith is legitimate as an object of and source for ridicule but not as a source of motivation.

### 3.3 Democratic implications

Based on the discussed material, we now turn to the democratic implications of the paradox. The political participation of immigrants may be attributed positive value from a democratic perspective. It could for example be argued that their participation brings in a broader set of perspectives and experiences, thereby enhancing the epistemic quality of decision-making in the polity (E. Anderson 2006). Or, that the self-transformative qualities of participation positively affect the autonomy and thereby freedom of immigrants (Warren 1992).

In contrast, the participation paradox actually limits the political freedom of immigrants. It crystallizes an idea of the *good* active citizen who showcases the ‘civicness’ that is deemed necessary for integration. This outline of what does and does not make a good citizen sets restrictive parameters for the participation of migrants. As already emphasized in the introduction of this chapter, the implications of the paradox are potentially different for various categories of immigrants, making it difficult to make general statements about them. For some people they are more structural than for others. For some they function primarily on a formal level (e.g. the requirement to sign the *Declaration*), whereas for others they also affect the informal level. Nevertheless, we distinguish three democratic implications that apply to ‘the immigrant’ more generally.

First, as we have seen in the debate around voting rights for third-country nationals, the fear of participation has led to a discussion on the desirability of participation in general. The idea that a specific form of civicness is necessary for good democratic participation means that not everyone qualifies as a competent participant, or as deserving of political rights. This way, the paradox affects the democratic position of resident foreigners most directly, since the *right to participate* is on the line.

Second, when immigrants do participate, they are not free to voice any interest or perspective. Because participation is to function as a tool for integration, it is discursively restricted to supporting the status quo. Participation aimed at change could be interpreted as non-integration, which is feared, and could be used as an argument for restrictions of political rights. To borrow Isin’s (2009) distinction: immigrants are to act as ‘active citizens’, but not as ‘activist citizens’. They should follow ‘a script for already existing citizens to follow already existing paths’ (383), and not disrupt the existing order by breaching such norms (384). Although the discursive restrictions mostly target immigrants with a Muslim background, they do not

leave other categories unaffected. The increasing emphasis on what is 'typically Danish' tightens the cultural conditions of 'good participation' for all immigrants and minorities, who are all subject of policies aiming to educate 'the immigrant' about these cultural conditions.

Third, the participation of immigrants is predominantly discussed from an integration perspective rather than an issue concerning the democratic qualities of the Danish polity overall.<sup>48</sup> This tendency is discernible both in the *Declaration*, and the parliamentary debate around voting rights for third-country nationals. In demarcating participation as a tool for integration through which immigrants can or should show their dedication to the polity, the discourse on active citizenship problematizes the 'passive immigrant'. Hence, an unequal distribution of a participation duty is constituted: while ethnic Danes may have a socially determined democratic duty for political participation as a part of their participatory political culture, they are free from the integration duty. Immigrants who refrain from democratic participation, in contrast, bear a double negative framing – that of both a democratic and an integration failure. While, depending on your understanding of citizenship, it may be justifiable to set up extra duties or conditions for people entering a polity (e.g. Miller 2016), there seems to be no justification for upholding this double duty after immigrants have obtained full formal citizenship. As noted in section 3.2, the current integration discourse upholds 'real citizens', and 'citizens in name only'. This way, even naturalized citizens and their offspring remain tied to this double duty.

Both resident foreigners and naturalized citizens should not make claims about interests or perspectives that depart from this status quo, specifically claims motivated by Islamic faith. If these conditions are not fulfilled, individuals are seen as an integration problem, which interferes with their social standing as a legitimate democratic participant. Consequently, the paradox potentially makes democracy a tool of othering rather than a tool of inclusion. It leaves immigrants in the paradoxical position in which they need to demonstrate their capacity of being well-functioning democratic citizens, without expecting to be included as citizens with equal standing as democratic participants.

### 3.4 Conclusion

While the democratic position of immigrants in Denmark is in itself an important issue, the relevance of the participation paradox stretches further: it has implications for our thinking about (political) integration. No matter how one defines integration exactly, this case study shows that we cannot understand political integration without profoundly investigating the power relations that constitute not only whether immigrants actually participate, but also

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<sup>48</sup> While the notions of democracy vary between political systems as well as between scientific approaches to society (see Bauböck 2010), it is common to associate inclusiveness with a good quality democracy.

what the parameters are set for their participation. In the current Danish polity, if immigrants reached participation rates equal to those of non-immigrant Danes, their participation would be conditioned and restrained by the civic integrationist discourse. In this situation, participation would similarly be used as an impetus for othering immigrants once they depart from the 'good civic' forms of active citizenship.

Two problems emerge from considering this 'integrated' situation, or as it is more commonly formulated, *the immigrants in this situation* as 'integrated'. First, we reinforce the 'integration dispensation' for non-immigrants and thereby bolster the idea that integration is mainly concerned with immigrants gaining human capital, such that they are capable of being equals to non-immigrants. Second, we impoverish the conceptual work that integration can do for us, because we miss out on some serious infringements of (political) equality and practices of social closure in contexts of immigration: these are not captured as long as the participation of immigrants is all that matters for political integration.

Hence, this analysis of the participation paradox provides an empirical illustration of how the receiving society is part and parcel of the integration process and needs to be an inherent part of our conceptions and operationalizations of integration.





# Chapter 4



Theorizing the Relationship between  
Participation and Integration

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter hones in further on the investigation of political participation, this time from a more conceptual angle. It takes on the question of why we should be interested in immigrant political participation for the investigation of political integration. What is it about political participation, such as public deliberation, signing petitions, voting, answering opinion polls, protesting, and other public expression of perspectives, that would make it an integration issue? This chapter discusses an example of the tendency, discussed in chapter 1, to take anything that has to do with immigrants as an issue of integration, without providing any precise theoretical argument for why this should be the case. It can, first of all, be seen as a call for conceptual clarity: its first aim is to generate a more precise understanding of why we should care about participation when investigating integration (or other issues connected to democracy and citizenship for that matter).<sup>49</sup>

Second, the chapter also aims to call attention to the ways in which research on participation is embedded in a wider political integration discourse. As I outline in 4.3, the undertheorized use of 'immigrant' participation as a proxy for political integration carries the serious risk of *reducing political integration to 'immigrant' participation*, thereby reinforcing civic integrationist assumptions, in which 'active citizenship' is presented as *the* road towards integration (Joppke 2007; Mouritsen & Jensen 2019).<sup>50</sup> With regard to participation, civic integrationism has been criticized for generating an integration governance structure in which 'immigrants' need to make up for some form of deviancy, by gaining certain skills or attitudes that they are supposedly lacking, while simultaneously presenting citizens without immigration background as enlightened, liberal, progressive, and democratic exemplary subjects (Kostakopoulou 2010). This also became apparent in the discussion of the participation paradox in the previous chapter.

Since the publication of Fennema & Tillie's (1999) article on ethnic organizations and immigrant political participation, a myriad of studies on both sides of the Atlantic have investigated the conditions under which 'immigrants' do and do not participate, as well as explanations for the variation in participation rates between 'immigrants' and 'non-immigrants' (Eggert & Giugni 2010; Hainmueller et al. 2015; Martiniello 2005; Mollenkopf & Hochschild

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49 To the best of my knowledge, a taxonomy as presented here does not yet exist. While the chapter mainly attends to the value of participation for integration research, the relevance of this taxonomy stretches beyond this field. The questions of why we should be investigating participation, and based on what theoretical assumptions, are equally relevant for research on the participation and citizenship of minorities or otherwise marginalized populations (see e.g. the discussion on the participation of citizens with a lower education and 'diploma democracy' (Bovens & Wille 2017) and democratic innovations (e.g. Smith 2009)).

50 This idea of active citizenship mostly concerns participation within civil society (for example in the UK and Germany), but in some countries it is also explicitly stated that immigrants should participate politically in the liberal democratic institutions of the host country (e.g. the Netherlands, where newly arrived immigrants need to sign a 'declaration of participation', or Denmark, where they need to sign a 'declaration of integration and active citizenship').

2010; Myrberg 2011; Rapp 2018; e.g. Tillie 2004; Voicu & Comşa 2014; Waters & Pineau 2015; Wright & Bloemraad 2012).

An overwhelming majority of these studies tend to take the ‘immigrant participation rate’ as a *proxy variable* for political integration,<sup>51</sup> without providing any further theoretical explanation of *why* their participation rate would indicate such integration. The shared intuition seems to be that more participation by immigrants necessarily indicates more integration, and that this assumption does not need any further explication. It appears that the mere fact that we are concerned with *immigrant* participation is enough to make this into an issue of integration.

So more immigrant participation → more inclusion → more integration.

I question this standard view of immigrant participation as a proxy for political integration. As the previous chapter has shown, we can problematize this inferred relationship from an empirical perspective by pointing to situations in which increased immigrant participation leads to resistance or a backlash from non-immigrants. In this chapter, I add a theoretical critique by scrutinizing the theoretical assumptions behind this inferred relationship, which are mostly left unexplained in conventional integration research. By not clarifying these theoretical assumptions of why participation would be informative for a study on integration, these studies do not explain how political integration is to be conceptualized, and why the participation rate of ‘immigrants’ would be a good indicator for its measurement.

First of all, the nature of the association between participation and integration remains unspecified. I argue we should make a distinction between three types of relationships that could underpin the measurement of political integration through the ‘participation of immigrants’:<sup>52</sup>

- i. Type 1: participation *signifies* integration, meaning that participation would be an indicator that integration has already taken place. Participation *results from* integration;
- ii. Type 2: participation *generates* integration, meaning that participation has integrative qualities, and integration could follow from participation. Participation *results in* integration;
- iii. Type 3: participation *constitutes* integration, meaning that political integration is to be, at least partially, conceptualized as participation. Participation *is* integration.

Second, it remains unclear *how* participation would signify, generate, or constitute integration. Consider the following hypothetical examples of general motives to be interested in participation

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<sup>51</sup> Political integration is used as a subset of a general integration process, alongside, for example, labour market integration, social integration, or cultural integration (Bloemraad & Vermeulen 2014).

<sup>52</sup> I thank Wouter Schakel for pointing out this differentiation within my analyses.

by immigrants when investigating political integration:

- a. 'Immigrant' participation is an indicator of the representation of minority interests within the polity;
- b. 'Immigrant' participation is an indicator of the equality of opportunity to participate in the polity;
- c. 'Immigrant' participation is an indicator of the immigrant's capabilities to function as a democratic citizen;
- d. 'Immigrant' participation is an indicator of the immigrant's identification with the polity.

The abovementioned examples are not just different epistemic lenses for investigating the same problem of integration. Rather, these assumptions start from different approaches towards the *virtuous qualities of participation*, and as a consequence have fundamentally different implications for what the process of 'political integration' would entail – or what the solution to the 'problem of integration' would be. If 'immigrant' participation is deemed integrative because it signifies immigrant representation (a. and b.), the integration problem is portrayed very differently from a scenario in which participation helps 'immigrants' to 'catch up' by acquiring certain skills and attitudes (c. and d.). In the former understanding, the solution to the problem of integration would be to address the (lack of) opportunities of (minority) citizens to voice their perspectives, or the unresponsiveness of the democratic system. In the latter, the solution would entail bringing citizens of an 'immigration background', who are somehow missing certain civic knowledge or skills, up to speed. Hence, the theoretical relationship between participation and integration is contingent on the type of virtue that we ascribe to participation in general, and 'immigrant' participation specifically. As such, the use of 'immigrant participation' as a proxy variable for political integration could be underpinned by many different theoretical approaches.

In order to get a more systematic, theoretically sound understanding of the conceptual relationship between immigrant participation and political integration, I provide a new, six-fold taxonomy of the virtuous qualities that could theoretically be ascribed to participation: education, identification, epistemic democratization, emancipation, legitimation, and interest satisfaction (4.2), and assess their viability as a foundation for using 'immigrant' participation as a proxy for political integration (4.3). For this assessment, I do not provide my own definition of political integration, but rather assess the internal logic of the theoretical inferences about what political integration would entail, and judge their viability based on this internal logic.

Based on a combination of the taxonomy's theoretical inferences and the considerations around the problems of civic integrationism as discussed in the previous chapters, I conclude that there is no such virtuous quality that provides an adequate theoretical foundation for using immigrant participation as a proxy for political integration. Some of the approaches, most notably education, identification, and subjective legitimation, reproduce a rather clear civic integrationist notion of political integration by inferring that integration is mainly an issue

of immigrants catching up with non-immigrants in terms of skills and attitudes that they are supposedly lacking. For the other approaches, the problem is more analytical. In these cases, the main problem is that the realization of what makes participation valuable for integration *always* depends on the institutionalization of some forms of political equality in the polity, in which immigrants are acknowledged as equals in terms of their social standing as participants. Whether immigrant participation does indicate, generate or constitute political integration can therefore not be investigated through this participation alone. As a consequence, the information that this variable can provide about the attainment of integration is too limited to serve as a proxy for its measurement. This is not to say that 'immigrant' participation cannot provide any valuable information altogether. It does mean, however, that we should not automatically make it into an issue of *integration*.

## 4.2 Theorizing the relationship between participation and integration

As indicated by the preliminary examples in the introduction, the theoretical relationship between participation and integration is contingent on assumptions of the virtuous qualities of political participation, i.e. why democratic participation would be something to be valued in the first place.<sup>53</sup> I therefore start this inquiry from the question: *what does participation do for the participant or the polity that makes it valuable for the participating individual or the polity as a whole?*

To get to a better understanding of what the political participation by immigrants could, and could not, tell us about political integration, I turn to social and political theory on democracy, citizenship and participation. Within this body of literature, we can roughly distinguish four schools of thought: liberal theory, republican theory, participatory theory, and critical theory. Although there are plenty of overviews of the general differences between these theoretical traditions (see e.g. Bellamy & Kennedy-Macfoy 2014; Gutmann 1996; Honohan 2017; Isin & Turner 2002), there has not been any systematic attention for the similarities and differences between their views on the virtue of participation in and of itself. For the purpose of this dissertation, I have distilled six qualities that are ascribed to participation in either or several of these theoretical traditions, on which the virtue of participation could be based: education; identification; epistemic democratization; legitimation; emancipation; and interest satisfaction. These qualities are not mutually exclusive, and could be combined within a single research approach. Together, they form a taxonomy of the various reasons that participation is deemed valuable in contemporary democracy theory.

For each of these qualities, I attend to four questions that serve the first aim of the chapter: to fill in the theoretical gap between 'immigrant participation' and 'political integration'.

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<sup>53</sup> See Hochschild et al. (2013) for a discussion on how broadly 'politics' and 'political participation' should be defined when investigating political integration.

I give a short outline of the main underlying theoretical assumptions of the virtuous quality (i), from which I deduce why *immigrant* participation would be valuable from this perspective (ii). I then turn to the question what these assumptions on the virtue of political participation imply about the problems and solutions of political integration, when using the former as a measurement for the latter (iii). Lastly, I turn to the type of relationship that these assumptions infer (signify/generate/constitute) and what kind of knowledge the variable of immigrant participation could generate about this specific understanding of integration (iv). An overview of these theoretical inferences can be found in table 4.1.

### 1. Education

First, there are scholars who argue that citizens could be taught a civic mind- and skill-set through their participation in the political procedures of a polity (i) (Barber 2003; Dewey 1937; Gutmann 1989; Manin 1987; Pateman 1970; Pettit 2002; Rawls 1999; Rousseau 2002).<sup>54</sup> Warren (1992) summarizes the general educational claim in democracy theory as follows:

[citizens] would become more public-spirited, more tolerant, more knowledgeable, more attentive to the interests of others, and more probing of their own interests. These transformations would improve the workings of higher-level representative institutions, as well as mitigate—if not remove—the threats democracy is held to pose to rights, pluralism, and governability (p. 8).

In addition to these socio-psychological effects, participation is also said to teach people practical democratic skills, such as deliberation and mobilization. The educative perspective on the virtue of participation, then, emphasizes that participation is self-reinforcing: people learn to participate constructively in a democratic polity through participation: ‘politics becomes its own university, citizenship its own training ground, and participation its own tutor’ (Barber 2003 p. 152).

An underlying assumption of this educational perspective on participation is that democratic values and a democratic attitude may not come naturally to people: they need to be learned. As such, this perspective relies on a (gradual) distinction between ‘civic’ and ‘uncivic’ participation. If people learn to participate in a civic way, democracy will thrive. However, ‘uncivic’ forms of participation may threaten the quality of a democracy. Most authors in this tradition argue that electoral participation is not sufficient to realize the educative potential of participation and emphasize the importance of deliberation.

From such an educational perspective, the *participation of immigrants would be valuable because it teaches them a civic mind-set and civic skills* (ii). Through participation, immigrants

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54 Although liberal scholars do acknowledge the educative potential of political participation (Gutmann 1989; Rawls 1999), it is particularly the tradition of participatory democracy (e.g. Dewey 1981; Pateman 1970; Rousseau 2002) in which this self-transforming educative potential of participation is emphasized.

would become more knowledgeable about issues in the polity, and learn to voice their own perspectives in a democratic way. The Fennema & Tillie article from 1999 that has sparked the research field on immigrant participation provides an illustration of this approach, when they argue that ethnic organizations can function as 'schools for democracy' (p. 723). Studying political integration through the participation of immigrants because of its educative potential implies that such a democratic mind- and skill-set is a necessary condition for the attainment of this subset of integration. It thereby makes political integration into a matter of immigrants' democratic socialization (iii).<sup>55</sup>

Starting from the assumptions of its educational merits, participation is understood to *generate* more integration through education, and hence implicates a type 2 relationship: participation potentially has integrative qualities, and integration could follow from participation. Quantitative information on immigrant participation, such as participation rates, in itself cannot function as an indicator of for the attainment of such an understanding of integration, since, as emphasized by many of these theorists, not *all* participation is educative. Participation may not entail more than a vote for the same party out of habit, without weighing different alternatives, learning about people's perspectives, etc. So if one would want to investigate political integration as democratic socialization, merely investigating a participation rate (as many research endeavours tend to do) is not sufficient. A more qualitative analysis would be necessary to investigate the realization of the educational merits of participation (iv).

## 2. Identification

Closely linked to these educational assets, scholars have also lauded participation for its identificational value (i). Both approaches to the virtue of participation concern a self-transformative aspect of the participation process (see Warren 1992).<sup>56</sup> Through participation, it is argued, individuals become more prone to take into account other people's interests, and thereby to acknowledge their interdependence, and develop a sense of solidarity, sympathy, or mutuality (E. Anderson 2009; Barber 2003; Mill 1977; Rawls 1999). Furthermore, through the experience of participation and responsibility felt for society as a whole, they could become more attached to the institutions of the (imagined) community (on the condition that these are well-functioning, democratic institutions) (Pateman 1970; Rousseau 2002). As such, this identification thus both concerns the mutual recognition between citizens, and the identification of citizens with the polity as a whole.<sup>57</sup> As with its potential educational merits, scholars emphasize that

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<sup>55</sup> Note that this of integration resonates well with civic integrationism. I return to this worry in the second part of the chapter.

<sup>56</sup> I discuss it as a distinctive value because the theoretical assumptions are slightly different and because the identification issue is so prominent in current political debates on integration.

<sup>57</sup> Although this emphasis on identificational value is mostly emphasized by scholars from a republican or participatory-democracy tradition, it can also be found in the work of liberal thinkers such as Mill (1977) and Rawls (1999). The latter states, for example, that taking part in political life will constitute a 'public will to consult

such feelings of solidarity, sympathy, and identification do not come naturally to people, and that their absence could potentially threaten the quality of a democracy. Barber, for example, calls participation that does not come from such an intention 'merely competitive interest-mongering' (2003, p. 155).

Starting from the identificational assets of participation, *the participation of immigrants would be valuable because it enhances their identification with the host country, and with fellow citizens* (ii). This identification could make immigrants more engaged with the polity and more dedicated to its functioning. Investigating political integration through immigrant participation because of its identificational value then implies that political integration requires immigrants to identify with the citizens and the institutions of the polity they live in. Political integration thereby becomes an issue of immigrants developing feelings of mutuality, solidarity, and identification (iii).<sup>58</sup>

The anchoring of the positive qualities of participation on its identificational potential lends itself to two types of theoretical relationships between participation and integration. As with the educational approach, it can be argued that identification can *generate* integration through identification (type 2). Yet, similarly, not all participation will have the desired identificational effects. So again, more qualitative analysis would be needed to investigate whether participation actually does lead to more feelings of solidarity, mutuality, and the like.

A further point of concern for this inferred relationship, is the fact that participation by immigrants may actually lead to resistance from non-immigrants. Recent empirical findings, amongst others those presented in the previous chapter, suggest that the participation of immigrants is not always welcomed by non-immigrants, and that people may even prefer immigrants to remain passive (Klarenbeek & Weide 2020; Verkuyten 2018; Verkuyten et al. 2016; Vermeulen 2018). As this research shows, the participation of immigrants may trigger practices of othering, polarization and social closure. Even if the participation in question would enhance the identification of the immigrant, it is questionable whether we could say it would lead to more integration-as-identification in the polity overall. It is therefore crucial to also investigate the role of the receiving society when approaching integration from an identificational perspective. I return to this point in the next section of this chapter.

Alternatively, the very act of participating in the polity could also be a form of engagement and identification in and of itself (type 3). All other things being equal, one can argue that participating citizens constitute a more integrated political community than detached citizens. Following this assumption, immigrant participation could be used as an indicator for political-integration-as-identification. When doing so, one should always be aware that participation can also involve acts of protesting a system, questioning feelings of solidarity,

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and to take everyone's beliefs and interests into account' which 'lays the foundations for civic friendship and shapes the ethos of political culture' (1999, 205).

<sup>58</sup> As with education, this of integration is problematic because of its resonance with civic integrationism.

opposing mutuality, etc. This is not to say that protesting cannot be integrative, but the extent to which participation does indeed indicate identification will depend on the context and needs to be differentiated (iv).

### 3. *Epistemic democratization*

While a focus on the educative assets of participation concerns the knowledge that participants gain through participation, an epistemic approach concerns the knowledge that is gained by 'the system' or the procedure of decision-making, and by other members of the public. Through participation, knowledge is aggregated. This aggregation, it is argued, both enhances the legitimacy of decision-making processes, and is likely to lead to better and more just outcomes (E. Anderson 2006; Cohen 1986; Landemore 2017; Phillips 1995). Participation is therefore not only valuable to the participating individual but to the polity as a whole, as it is then better equipped to make democratic decisions.

The more people participate, and the higher their epistemic diversity of those who participate, the more perspectives and (embodied) knowledge will be part of a decision-making process. Participation, from an epistemic point of view, is important because of citizens in various positions in a society have different experiences of problems, policies, and public interests, which are crucial for coming up with solutions to these problems, as well as evaluating these solutions (E. Anderson 2006 p. 14; see also Dewey 1981). This accounts both for procedures of direct democracy, in which participants can take more different perspectives into consideration, and for representative democracy, in which decision-makers should be more responsive to diverse perspectives. Particularly in more deliberative participatory processes, the sheer presence of minority members may make a difference, according to the 'accountability hypothesis':

the presence of diverse members in a working group of equals widens the range of people to whom each participant must justify their opinions and conduct and so motivates the participants to think more carefully about what they say and do *from what they anticipate are the perspectives of [...] out-group members*. This inspires participants to be more thoughtful, to consider a wider range of information, to take more seriously concerns that would be dismissed in a more homogenous groups (E.Anderson 2010 p. 130) [emphasis in the original].

Starting from the notion of epistemic diversity, *immigrant participation is valuable because it would enhance the epistemic diversity of a decision-making process* (ii). If decision-makers want to engage all relevant concerns, the perspectives of minorities are extra important because minorities may well be asymmetrically affected by specific social problems and proposed solutions to these problems (Phillips 1995). As such, the epistemic approach is primarily concerned with the integration of the polity, rather than that of immigrants. From this perspective, political

integration is primarily a matter of accumulating and illuminating different perspectives and interests of the people that make up the polity. Immigrant participation becomes a necessary – but not sufficient – condition for such integration (iii).

Starting from epistemic concerns, participation could *generate* integration (type 2). However, when investigating political integration through the epistemic potential of participation, the immigrant participation rate can only provide partial information about its attainment. For a democracy to be able to gain from its epistemic diversity, *inclusive participation* must be institutionalized in both formal and informal ways:

To realize the epistemic powers of democracy, citizens must follow norms that welcome or at least tolerate diversity and dissent, *that recognize the equality of participants in discussion by giving all a respectful hearing, regardless of their social status*, and that institute deliberation and reason-giving, rather than threats and insults, as the basis of their communication with one another (E. Anderson 2006, 15 [my emphasis]).

Hence, some form of political equality is a condition for the realization of the epistemic assets of participation, as they mutually reinforce each other. When investigating the epistemic potential of immigrants' participation, the inclusivity of the polity and participation procedures need to be taken into account (iv).

#### 4. Legitimation

Fourth, participation could be valuable for the legitimacy of democratic institutions and procedures of decision-making. There are many different types of legitimacy distinguished in the literature (see e.g. Levitov 2016). For the purpose of this taxonomy, I discuss those that have a clear theoretical connection to political participation: subjective legitimacy and proceduralist legitimacy.

##### a) Subjective Legitimacy

First, participation could generate legitimacy as subjective legitimacy, or 'the belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate or proper ones for the society' (Lipset 1959, 87) (i). Subjective legitimacy concerns a socio-psychological effect of participation, in which legitimacy depends on whether citizens subjectively conceive of institutions to be legitimate, rather than the justification of actual decisions. Pateman, for example, states that participatory processes generate feelings of political efficacy, and diminish tendencies towards non-democratic attitudes (1970, p.105).

Following these assumptions, *the participation of immigrants would be valuable for integration because it increases their feelings of subjective legitimacy* (ii). Through participation, immigrants would take up the conviction that the democratic institutions of the polity are apt as

they are. Starting from this approach, using immigrant participation as an indicator for political integration, implies that that political integration is somehow concerned with the feelings of legitimacy of the immigrant. The political integration process then revolves around immigrants developing feelings of approval and support for these institutions (iii).

In this approach, participation would be a *generator* of integration (type 2). Again, as with the previous approaches, the participation rate of immigrants does not necessarily indicate that such subjective legitimacy has been attained. In cases in which immigrants are not taken seriously as participants, participation may very well generate disillusionment and disengagement, rather than subjective legitimacy. Whether participation does generate subjective legitimacy would thus require more investigation (iv).

### *b) Proceduralist Legitimacy*

Proceduralist legitimacy, as a normative conception of legitimacy<sup>59</sup>, concerns the legitimacy of the procedures through which decisions are made (see e.g. Christiano 2003). Within this framework there are scholars who argue that decisions are legitimate if they are made through a procedure in which those who will be affected by the decision have participated (this links back to epistemic democratization) (i). This view is most profoundly expressed in participatory and deliberative democratic theory. As stated by Gutmann (1996):

[T]he legitimate exercise of political authority requires justification to those people who are bound by it, and decision-making by deliberation among free and equal citizens is the most defensible justification anyone has to offer for provisionally settling controversial issues (p. 344).<sup>60</sup>

According to most scholars who work on participation and legitimacy, the participatory procedures of electoral democracies are not sufficient to generate such proceduralist legitimacy. Participatory processes need to encompass deliberative discussions, which institutionalize equal opportunity to voice different perspectives and interests (Benhabib 1996; Christiano 1996; Cohen 1999; Held 2006; Lafont 2015; Manin 1987).

The *participation of immigrants would then be valuable because it enhances the procedural legitimacy of a democracy* (ii). Democratic decisions are more legitimate when they have been formed by more people. Furthermore, it could be argued that the participation of people with an outsider status is extra important here, since their perspectives are less likely to be already

59 Which means it involves the normative principles that underlie the 'moral right to rule over those it claims the authority to govern' (Levitov 2016, 1). Normative conceptions of legitimacy are to be contrasted with sociological conceptions of legitimacy which are concerned with the empirical question of people believing certain institutions to be legitimate – like with the subjective conception of legitimacy discussed in the previous section.

60 Note that this is different from stating that, all other things being equal, one would consider the outcome of elections or referenda to be more legitimate when more people have participated because the decision-making process has generated more *consent*.

represented in the participating demos.

When using participation as a concern of proceduralist legitimacy for the investigation of political integration, it is implied that political integration requires the such legitimate of procedures of decision-making. As with the epistemic approach, it is thereby concerned with the integration of the polity, more than the integration of the participating citizen (iii).

From the perspective of procedural legitimacy, more immigrant participation would *signify* more integration, as their participation necessarily enhances the procedural legitimacy of the decisions that are made in the polity (type 1). Yet, this participation rate is not a sufficient condition for the realization of procedural legitimacy. As we can take from the citation by Gutmann, proceduralist legitimacy requires participation of *free and equal individuals*. Again, a certain degree of political equality is necessary to realize the full legitimizing potential of their participation. As with the epistemic approach, the openness and inclusivity of the polity and its participation procedures need to be investigated in order to come to any solid conclusions about the procedural legitimacy of the polity (iv).

### 5. *Emancipation*

Fifth, participation can be attributed emancipatory qualities because participation in democratic processes can be liberating. I use emancipation here as an intransitive concept: a process of becoming free, or a state of being free. It can either concern the liberation of people in general or a specific group of people from specific constraints (see e.g. Nederveen Pieterse 1992; Rebughini 2015; Wendehorst 1999). An emancipatory perspective on the virtue of participation thus focuses on the relationship between participation and *freedom*.

Traditionally, democracy and citizenship theory distinguishes four types of freedom: negative, positive, republican and relational freedom.<sup>61</sup> I leave negative and republican freedom out of this taxonomy, because of their tenuous connection to political participation.<sup>62</sup>

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61 I will not engage in discussions about to what extent these different conceptions of freedom are actually fundamentally different (some argue, for example, that republican and positive freedom very much overlap, while others state that there is in fact no real difference between republican and negative freedom (see e.g. Honohan 2017)).

62 Negative freedom, most famously defined by Berlin (2002, 169) as the absence of interference with one's choices, does not strictly require democracy and therefore no democratic participation (see e.g. Schumpeter 1976, 271–72). Although there are authors in this tradition who are somewhat optimistic about the potential positive outcomes of democratic participation (see e.g. Dahl 2000), the link between participation and emancipation remains rather weak. The republican conception of freedom, which is concerned with the absence of domination rather than interference, pertains a stronger connection to participation. Domination means to be subject to the *potential* of arbitrary interference, rather than the actual realization of such interference. In a republican free society, no citizen has such a power of arbitrary interference over one another (Held 2006; Pettit 2002, 5). While many republican scholars argue that participation as a form of commitment to the community is a desirable public good (e.g. Dagger 2002; Miller 1995; Pocock 1992; Skinner 1992), it is not clear that this participation should be *political*, and it does not seem to be a necessary condition for the realization of republican freedom.

### a) *Positive freedom*

Participation could be deemed emancipatory in that it constitutes positive freedom (Arendt 1958; Barber 2003; Pateman 1970; Rousseau 2002). Within this tradition, participation is depicted as a way of realizing autonomy, a concept that has been ascribed many different definitions but is generally denoted as a capacity to be independent, both in terms of self-definition and self-determination. To be free means to be autonomous: to rule oneself, to define oneself, and to get to independent judgement (Baynes 2009; Held 2006). From this perspective, participation is first and foremost a way to co-constitute the rules to which one is subject, and is thereby a realization of self-rule in the context of a polity (i). Note that theorists who argue that autonomy is constituted through political participation start from the (Hegelian) assumption that autonomy is a social and political capacity rather than a pre-political concept: autonomy (partly) depends on the recognition of others (see also Rousseau 2002 SC I.8)<sup>63</sup>

From this perspective, the *participation of immigrants is valuable because it would constitute their autonomy*, as it enables them to co-constitute the rules to which they are subject (ii). Through participation, immigrants would take charge of their own governance, rather than leaving it to others to rule over them. By using this understanding of the value of immigrant participation for the measurement of integration, integration is then depicted as a process concerned with the realization of immigrants' autonomy (iii).

In terms of the type of relationship that positive-freedom-as-autonomy infers between participation and integration, there are two options. On the one hand, participation would *be* a form of positive freedom. All other things being equal, more participation would indicate more autonomy. It functions as a necessary condition for its realization: it is impossible to be autonomous if one does not partake in the constitution of the rules that govern one's life. This way, immigrant participation would *constitute* integration (type 3). However, we would need to keep in mind that the participation of immigrants is not a sufficient condition to constitute full autonomy. If participation triggers systematic resistance by others, such that it structurally undermines the social standing of the participant, this may then impede the realization of the participant's autonomy. (This is not to say that all forms of opposition or resistance necessarily undermine someone's autonomy.) So the extent to which immigrants can realize their autonomy through participation depends, again, on the rest of society. As such, we can conclude that participation in itself does not necessarily indicate an attained state of integration-as-autonomy. If immigrants do *not* participate, however, this would necessarily impede their autonomy, and therefore signal an integration problem from the perspective of positive freedom.

Alternatively, participation could also be said to *generate* autonomy (type 2): 'by raising one's wants, needs, and desires to the level of consciousness and by formulating them in speech, one increases one's sense of identity and autonomy' (Warren 1992, 12). In this case, the

<sup>63</sup> In contemporary democratic theory, this account of 'recognition' autonomy is predominantly found in communitarian and critical theory (Baynes 2009, 578).

attainment of integration would not so much depend on the receiving society, but on the quality of the participation, and would need similar qualitative scrutiny as from the educational and identificational perspective.<sup>64</sup>

*b) Relational freedom*

A second understanding of emancipation concerns a transformation of power relations between citizens (see e.g. Dauenhauer 1982; Simmel 1950). In this relational understanding, freedom does not have an essence by which it can be defined, but it is concerned with what a person can do *under given circumstances*: 'Freedom, in other words, means nothing apart from the concrete transactions in which individuals engage, within cultural, social structural, and social psychological contexts of action' (Emirbayer 1997, 293). From this perspective, participation can be instrumental to the redistribution of power such that 'have-not' citizens can be included in decision-making processes (Arnstein 1969; Fung 2006) and thereby foster emancipation from powerlessness marginalization, and, potentially, oppression (i) (Anderson 2009; Fraser 2001; Giddens 1991; Stahl 2017; Young 1997, 2011). This argument has, roughly, also been made by scholars who are concerned with democracy as an issue of social equality (e.g. Koledny 2014): for people to be socially equal, rather than stand in relations of superiority and inferiority, they need to have as much (opportunity of) influence on political decisions as anyone else have.<sup>65</sup>

Starting from relational freedom, *the participation of immigrants would indicate integration as far as it empowers outsiders and, as such, redistributes power* (ii). Through participation, immigrants constitute themselves as political actors to whom other actors in the polity somehow need to relate. Political integration, in this understanding, is portrayed as a process of power transformation, in which immigrants emancipate from their marginalized position (iii).

When investigating political integration through participation as emancipation, one could argue that immigrant participation necessarily indicates more political integration since, all other things being equal, to be active, to voice one's perspectives and interests, means that one is less marginalized than when passive. In this sense, participation by immigrants would *constitute* integration (type 3). However, the extent to which this participation would then generate a transformation of power relations depends heavily on the circumstances and role of the receiving society (type 2). The conclusions we can draw from this indicator on its own are therefore limited. More information could be gained from a more relational approach, in which

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64 Note that this approach comes rather close to the civic integrationist idea that (a liberal, secular conception of) autonomy is something that immigrants need to learn, before they can function as equally worthy participants in the polity. An illustration would be the concern for 'passive immigrant women', who are assumed to be dominated by their husbands such that they cannot participate in the public and political sphere autonomously (see e.g. Roggeband and Verloo 2007).

65 This argument does not necessarily imply that people need to actually use this opportunity of influence. However, if a person or category of persons structurally does not use their opportunity to influence decision-making, it is questionable whether the political power relations can still be called equal.

the power transformation is more adequately investigated (iv).

### 6. *Interest satisfaction*

Finally, participation could be deemed valuable as a way to pursue interests, be they private, public, individual, group or collective interests (i).<sup>66</sup> Participation is then instrumentally valuable as a mechanism through which citizens have the opportunity to influence decision-making to get something done, either by the government or through direct participation in decision-making procedures.<sup>67</sup> Democratic participation provides citizens a chance to pursue their own interests according to their ideas of the good life. Although there are many variations to this liberal theme,<sup>68</sup> these theories generally start from the assumption that citizens have different interests (e.g. Hamilton et al. 2008), and different ideas of the good life that are mutually competitive (also called 'the fact of pluralism' by Rawls (1999); 'value pluralism' by Berlin (2002); and 'the market of interests' by Dahl (2000)). Through political participation, citizens can try to convince decision-makers and co-citizens that their interests are worthy, which should, in turn, 'compel those in authority to be responsible to the felt interests of the electorate' (Rawls 1999).

As much as citizens have the right to participate in this tradition of democratic thinking, they also have the right to *not* participate. On the contrary, some apathy or passivity is actually considered to be good for reaching consensus (Dahl 2000; Downs 1957; Warren 1992 p. 10). As long as everyone has an equal opportunity to participate and determine the outcome of decision-making processes, non-participation does not necessarily signal a problem. Passive citizens may just be very satisfied, and therefore not see a reason to participate. Or, they may have made the valid choice to strive for their interests in different ways than through political participation. This idea that 'the good life' does not necessarily involve political engagement is also known as 'the right to exit' (Hirschman 1978; Kukathas 2003; Warren 2011). Participation is a right, not a duty and it takes on an incidental and issue-based character (cf. Walzer 2014). This approach is primarily concerned with the importance of an equal opportunity to satisfy interests through participation in the polity, rather than with the realization of actual participation.

So an interest-satisfaction approach to participation and integration involves an

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<sup>66</sup> This view on political participation is mostly associated with – but not limited to (see e.g. Warren 1992) – liberal theories of democracy and citizenship (Held 2006).

<sup>67</sup>

<sup>68</sup> While some authors limit these interests strictly to individual material interests (e.g. Ackerman 1980), this restriction is not theoretically necessary. Citizens can very well be striving for a common good (or at least something they believe to be a common good) (Rawls 1999; Warren 1992). A second issue that scholars disagree on is whether democratic participation is just a way of aggregating pre-political interests (e.g. Easton 1965: 50), or whether these interests may also be changed through the process of participation (e.g. Warren 1992). A third debate concerns the question of whether interest satisfaction is the sole purpose of democratic participation (Ackerman, 1980), or whether it is one of many (Anderson 2009; Chan and Miller 1991; Elster 2003).

assumption that *the participation of immigrants is valuable for integration because it provides immigrants the opportunity to satisfy their interests (ii)*. Through participation, immigrants enhance the chance that their interests will be represented in political decision-making, and as such, have more of an opportunity to live their life as they see fit (iii).

Starting from interest satisfaction as the virtue of participation, one could say that participation could *generate* integration in that it generates opportunities for immigrants to have their interests satisfied (type 2). In doing so, it is vital to keep in mind that immigrant participation would not be a sufficient condition for an equal chance to determine the outcomes of decision-making processes. If immigrants participate but their input is structurally ignored, we can hardly say that their 'opportunity' to participate is meaningful. More participation does therefore not necessarily indicate more integration.

Alternatively, immigrant participation may serve as an equality-of-outcome indicator (Phillips 2004), which could be seen as a weaker version of a type 1 relationship, in which participation signifies integration. The assumption would be that, since immigrants have something to gain from political participation, we would expect them to participate as much as any other citizen. A participation gap between immigrants and non-immigrants may point to barriers to equal opportunities to participate and satisfy interests. The actualized participation of immigrants could then serve as an indicator for the openness of institutions and residents of the receiving society. When doing so, however, the objection could be made that passivity may also be an indicator of contentment (and similarly participation may be an indicator of a perceived lack of representation of one's interests).

**Table 4.1.** *Theoretical implications of using immigrant participation as proxy for political integration*

	<b>Virtue of Participation (i)</b>	<b>Virtue of immigrant participation (ii)</b>	<b>Inferred assumptions about political integration (iii)</b>	<b>Type relation (iv)</b>
1. <i>Education</i>	Participation teaches people a civic mind- and skill-set	Immigrant participation teaches immigrants a civic mind- and skill-set	Integration requires immigrants to acquire a civic mind- and skill-set	Type 2: Participation could <i>generate</i> integration
2. <i>Identification</i>	Participation enhances identification with fellow citizens and institutions	Immigrant participation enhances immigrants' identification with their fellow citizens and institutions of the polity	Integration requires immigrants to identify with their fellow citizens and institutions of the polity	Type 2: Participation could <i>generate</i> integration Type 3: Participation could <i>constitute</i> integration
3. <i>Epistemic democratization</i>	Participation generates knowledge for decision-making procedure	Immigrant participation generates knowledge among minority on decision-making process	Integration requires the system to have knowledge about immigrants' perspectives	Type 2: Participation could <i>generate</i> integration
4a. <i>Legitimation - subjective</i>	Participation enhances feelings of legitimacy	Immigrant participation enhances immigrants' feelings of legitimacy	Integration requires immigrants to have feelings of legitimacy	Type 2: Participation could <i>generate</i> integration
4b. <i>Legitimation - procedural</i>	Participation enhances procedural legitimacy of decision-making	Immigrant participation enhances the procedural legitimacy of decision-making	Integration requires legitimate procedures of decision-making	Type 2: Participation could <i>generate</i> integration Type 3: Participation could <i>constitute</i> integration
5a. <i>Emancipation - positive freedom</i>	Participation constitutes autonomy as self-rule	Immigrant participation constitutes immigrants' autonomy	Integration requires immigrants to be autonomous	Type 3: Participation could <i>constitute</i> integration
5b. <i>Emancipation - relational freedom</i>	Participation transfers power from the haves to the have-nots	Immigrant participation is valuable because it empowers immigrants	Integration requires the empowerment of immigrants	Type 1: Participation could <i>signify</i> integration Type 2: Participation could <i>generate</i> integration
6. <i>Interest satisfaction</i>	Participation provides the opportunity to satisfy interests	Immigrant participation provides immigrants the opportunity to satisfy interests	Integration requires opportunities for immigrants to satisfy their interests	Type 1: Participation could <i>signify</i> integration Type 2: Participation could <i>generate</i> integration

### 4.3 Using immigrant participation as a proxy for political integration

As I have outlined in the previous section, the theoretical relationship between participation and integration is contingent on assumptions of why participation would be valuable for the participating individual or the polity in the first place (i). When using immigrant participation for the measurement of political integration, the qualities of participation that I have distinguished all constitute a specific understanding of what political integration requires (iii), and what political participation by immigrants can tell us about the attainment of this specific understanding of political integration (iv).

In short, I argue that none of these virtues provide a foundation for doing so. All of the approaches face either one of two shortcomings. The realization of what makes participation valuable for integration either depends on: a) the quality of the actual participation, or b) the attainment of political equality in the receiving society. An overview of these shortcomings, as described in section 4.2, can be found in table 4.2:

**Table 4.2**

Type relationship:	Participation virtue:	Realization integration depends on:
1. Participation <i>signifies</i> :	Relational freedom (1)	Political equality
	Interest satisfaction (1)	Political equality
2. Participation <i>generates</i> :	Education	Quality participation
	Identification (1)	Quality participation
	Subjective legitimacy	Quality participation
	Positive freedom (1)	Quality participation
	Relational freedom (2)	Political equality
	Interest satisfaction (2)	Political equality
	Epistemic democratization	Political equality
3. Participation <i>constitutes</i> :	Identification (2)	Political equality
	Procedural legitimacy	Political equality
	Positive Freedom (2)	Political equality

For those type 2 approaches where the realization of integration depends on *the quality of the realized participation* – education, identification, subjective legitimacy and positive freedom – the main problem is a normative one: the implication is that political integration could be reduced to a process in which some deficiency of immigrants is fixed.

Suggesting that immigrant participation would be specifically relevant for political integration – and could even function as a proxy for its measurement – because of its *educational qualities* strongly reinforces the civic integrationist idea that immigrants need to be taught to

be good citizens by acquiring skills they are currently lacking. Particularly when it is not made explicit – as it often is not – that non-immigrants would also need such a civic mind- and skill-set for political integration to be attained, one bolsters the problematic assumptions of civic integrationism. The same goes for the notion that political integration is a matter of the immigrants' *identification*: one feeds the assumption that it is immigrants who need to identify with non-immigrants and with the institutions of the polity, but not necessarily the other way around. Similarly, the idea that *subjective legitimacy* is something that needs to be generated amongst immigrants resonates well with the civic integrationist perception of a threat posed by immigrants who would have generally lower feelings of subjective legitimacy, and may be more inclined to have non-democratic attitudes.

The second problem that I want to highlight is that, for a large majority of participation virtues, the extent to which immigrant participation would signify, generate or constitute integration does not depend on their participation alone. In these approaches, participation is only valuable under conditions of political equality: these political institutions, as well as the people who participate in them, need to acknowledge immigrants as equally entitled to participate in the decision-making processes of the community as any other, to be influential in doing so, and to have their perspectives and interests equally weighed in these decision-making processes.<sup>69</sup> This does not mean that everyone gets what they want, but rather that political claims are not marginalized or simply disregarded because of the (assumed) identity of the person that makes them.

Only under such conditions of legitimate membership can immigrant participation signify a meaningful transformation of power relations (*relational freedom*); or the opportunity to satisfy interests (*interest satisfaction*). The same goes for whether participation generates more knowledge for better decision-making (*epistemic democratization*); a transformation of power relations (*relational freedom*); or more opportunities for interest satisfaction. Equally, whether participation does constitute more (mutual) identification, more procedural legitimacy, and more autonomy (*positive freedom*) depends on the legitimacy of one's membership.

This makes the acknowledgement as equals such a fundamental part of the process of political integration that immigrant participation in and of itself cannot provide enough information about its attainment to function as a proxy. Note that this is a very fundamental critique of this type of research practice. Not only am I arguing that immigrant participation does not suffice as a proxy because it is only one of many factors that are important for integration; I argue that even the integration value of immigrant participation in itself cannot be captured without taking into account the receiving society.

In other words, I argue that we cannot state that more immigrant participation automatically indicates a meaningful level of political integration. Whether this is the case

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<sup>69</sup> See also Nancy Fraser's (2010) work on participatory parity.

will *always* depend on the reception of this participation by the receiving society. Neglecting this is especially problematic because the receiving society and non-immigrants are typically more powerful and have access to more resources than immigrants do. As such, their role in the integration process is likely to be more decisive for its outcomes than that of immigrants (see also Penninx & Garcés-Masareñas 2016). Immigrant participation in and of itself provides rather limited information about the attainment of integration, and is therefore inaccurate as a proxy for its measurement.

A last issue that needs to be taken into account here is the democratic right to be passive. When researching political integration through the participation of immigrants, one risks suggesting that passive immigrants are, by definition, an integration problem. The immigrants' rights to be passive or 'the right to exit', as legitimate political strategies are thereby denied (see e.g. Hirschman 1978; Kukathas 2003; Warren 2011). Specifically when investigating the participation of immigrants *only*, it risks suggesting that passive immigrants are somehow an integration problem in a way that passive non-immigrants are not. Again, this notion resonates rather well with the civic integrationist emphasis on 'active citizenship'.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

Migration researchers generally seem to share an intuition that political participation by immigrants is somehow relevant for the attainment of integration. Yet, the theoretical assumptions that underpin this relationship are mostly left implicit. The taxonomy that I have presented should enhance our understanding of different possible approaches towards the virtue of participation in general, and the relationship between participation and political integration in particular.

Furthermore, it provides the theoretical ground for renouncing the research practice of using immigrant political participation in and of its own as a proxy for the measurement of political integration. Depending on one's theoretical approach towards the relationship between the two, 'immigrant participation' as a proxy either generates undesirable conceptions of what political integration entails, provides too little information about its attainment, or both.

The institutionalization of political equality, such that participants enjoy the social standing for their participation to be valuable, is a necessary condition for the attainment of integration through participation. As such, scholars should move away from using the variable as a proxy for integration. This is not to say that immigrant participation cannot provide any valuable information for the investigation of integration altogether. However, it can only do so when part of a broader research agenda that involves the workings of legitimate membership in a polity, and how it affects the participation that was under scrutiny in the first place.

The implications of this argument stretch beyond the field of integration and migration studies. Answers to the question of why we should care about participation, and under what conditions the merits of participation can actually be realised, are constructive for general research on political participation, citizenship, and for example the design of democratic innovations. Discussions about the political participation, representation and civicism of other marginalized groups – such as for example people with lower education levels who are often depicted as disengaged, less civic-minded, with lower levels of subjective legitimacy, and lower representation of their interests (Bovens & Wille 2017) – often take on similar forms to those on the participation of immigrants.



# Chapter 5



Introducing Relational Integration

## 5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, I have provided three studies that have, each in their own way, highlighted conceptual problems in current integration studies. I have shown that there is serious conceptual confusion over what would constitute an 'integration problem', and pointed out how an under-theorization of the concept paves the way for forms of residual civic integrationism.

In this chapter, I present my proposal for a theoretical conception of what constitutes an integration problem. The first part aims to answer a normative question: what kind of issues should we be discussing under the denominator of 'integration'? Here, I argue that we should be thinking about integration problems as a subset of *relational inequality*, and build on political philosophy literature (E. Anderson 1999; Fourie et al. 2015) on this matter. The second part focuses on the type of social phenomena that integration problems involve. This part builds on theories of *relational sociology* (Emirbayer 1997), particularly on the notions of legitimation processes that constitute inegalitarian relations amongst members (e.g. Lamont 2012); and social boundaries through which these inegalitarian relations are manifested in unequal access to resources (both material and immaterial) and opportunities (Lamont & Molnár 2002; Tilly 2005).

The emphasis on the normative aspect of this reconceptualization may seem unconventional to some migration scholars, who have strived to 'neutralize' the integration concept – that is to cleanse it of its political connotations and make it a strictly analytical term instead (e.g. Grzymala-Kazłowska & Phillimore 2018). Penninx & Garcés Mascareñas (2016 p. 13), for example, advocate a 'non-normative', analytical approach to integration in which they define the latter as 'the process of becoming an accepted part of society' (p 14). Such an analytical approach, they argue, does not take a stance in the normative debate on who would need to adapt to whom for integration to be successful, or discussions on the degree of, or the particular requirements for, acceptance by the receiving society (Ibid.).

Yet, even if one chooses not to take a normative stance in these specific debates, it still matters *why* one would be interested in immigrants 'becoming an accepted part of society' in the first place. It makes a difference whether one cares about this acceptance, for example, for the 'functioning of society' (e.g. concerns of unity or social cohesion), or because one is concerned with 'equality in society'.<sup>70</sup> Since it is impossible to describe every aspect that is somehow related to the social situation of people's settlement in a new country, scholars inevitably need to make choices in what aspects of this situation are worth investigating for the 'process of becoming accepted' and what aspects are not. These decisions are unavoidably underpinned by (tacit)

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<sup>70</sup> This normative stance is actually also likely to affect one's stance in the debate on who would need to adapt to whom. If we are interested in the acceptance of immigrants because of considerations of equality this is likely to rule out a one-way integration scenario of cultural assimilation. Such one-way conceptions of integration, in which the adaptation of immigrants until being 'unrecognisable as an immigrant' serves as a condition for being accepted by the receiving society, would be at odds with many conceptions of equality.

normative arguments about why we should care about the subject in the first place. As such, they give a normative direction to the measurement of non-normative concepts, even if their measurement is itself non-normative and analytical.

Hence, it is not so much Penninx and Garcés-Masareñas' framework as such that I want to problematize here,<sup>71</sup> but instead this call for non-normativity. I worry that it reinforces a tendency in which research endeavours present seemingly objective numbers of political participation, national identification, intercultural marriage, etc., as if they are *naturally* of interest for integration, without explaining why this would be the case.<sup>72</sup> The normative reasons for investigating specific phenomena are rarely made explicit by scholars, nor, I suspect, are they systematically thought through. As I have shown in the previous chapter, this makes for problematic research practices with unwarranted normative implications. To revert to the study presented in chapter 4: If one just assumes that the 'participation of immigrants' is an indicator, or even a proxy, for political integration without theorizing and explaining why, one risks reinforcing the politically dominant idea that the integration problem is located in the existence of 'passive immigrants', who need to be activated and participate in order to be good democratic citizens (implicating that the passive immigrant may be a threat to the functioning of this allegedly democratic polity). This way, residual civic integrationism finds its way into supposedly value neutral integration research.

Therefore, a proper conceptual framework of integration needs to start from explicitly theorizing its normative foundations, such that it can provide a theoretically consistent understanding of the normative wrongs that constitute integration problems. Rather than trying to find a neutral, descriptive definition of integration that fits some objective reality of integration problems and integration processes, I ask how we might usefully revise what we mean by integration (see Haslanger, 2012 p. 224), for theoretical and political purposes, that I outline below. This should provide integration scholars tools for operationalizing the concept in a theoretically consistent manner and stay away from the normatively problematic civic integrationist assumptions about integration that are so dominant in current ways of political thinking about integration.

This is why I start this chapter by arguing that the normative 'integration problem' that migration scholars should be interested in, is constituted by situations of *relational inequality*

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71 Even though I have criticized this definition in chapter 2 for upholding the 'integration dispensation'. Penninx and Garcés-Masareñas' framework is one of the more carefully theorized on this matter. Though they could be more specific about their normative reasons for being interested in acceptance, they do link potential empirical indicators of integration to 'acceptance' in a way that resonates with normative frameworks of recognition and equality. So, reading between the lines, we can more or less deduct their normative starting point.

72 A surprising amount of scholars measure the concept of integration without even giving a definition of either the integration problem or the integration process at all, relying instead on tacitly shared assumptions of what integration is and is not, and why certain aspects matter for its investigation (see e.g. Ager & Strang 2008; Crul & Schneider 2010; Koopmans 2010).

specific to contexts of immigration (5.2.1). Relational inequality pertains to inegalitarian relations amongst people that constitute superior and inferior positions in society and that generate and justify inequalities in the distribution of freedoms, resources, and welfare (E. Anderson 1999, p. 312). The particular relations that are of interest for the investigation of integration problems, I argue, are *inegalitarian membership relations*: hierarchical membership relations that emerge in situations of immigration, such that some people, often those designated as migrants, are regarded as inferior members by their fellow members as well as by the institutions that regulate these membership relations. As such, these members are pertained as less deserving of, and less entitled to, the formal rights and informal advantages that members generally enjoy.

Building on this theorization of the normative problem of relational integration, I continue in 5.3 by arguing that relational integration problems can be investigated by analysing processes of *legitimation*,<sup>73</sup> in which people are evaluated as members of a society and their concurrent dynamics of social closure or openness, through which people are granted more or less access to resources within society (Tilly 2005). Based on this understanding of the integration problem, investigations on relational integration would involve tracking and problematizing legitimation processes through which hierarchical membership relations emerge, as well as the social boundaries that are constituted by these processes. In 5.4 I then further theorize what non-hierarchical or integrated membership relations would look like, as a negation of these hierarchical membership relations.

I finish the chapter with two theoretical considerations about integration that I derive from the conception of integration as a problem of relational inequality. The first is that relational integration potentially requires significant forms of social change that go beyond temporal adaptation problems that 'naturally arise' with the arrival of newcomers to a country (5.5). Instead, I argue, relational integration processes are processes of *social transformation*. Second, this conceptualization has implications for where the integration process is situated (5.6). Rather than taking 'integration' as a characteristic of a certain person who would be 'more' or 'less' integrated, relational integration asks whether membership relations, and the social phenomena in which they are expressed, are integrated. This means an explicit departure from conventional integration research: from analysing the integration of certain people (immigrants), we move towards analysing the integration of social relations amongst people.

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73 I refer to a sociological understanding of legitimacy here, which takes legitimacy as a generalized perception that an entity (either a person, an action or a situation) is desirable or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, practices and procedures (Johnson et al. 2006; Lamont 2012; Suchman 1995 p. 574; Zelditch 2001 p. 33).

## 5.2 The integration problem

Revising the meaning of integration as a concept does not mean that one can take the word 'integration' and use it to describe any phenomenon one happens to find important. Semantically, this is not how revisional conceptual analysis works, and it would defeat the purpose of coming up with a conception of integration that resonates with, and is useful for empirical integration scholars. As Haslanger (2012) states:

the proposed shift in meaning of the term would seem semantically warranted if central functions of the term remain the same, for example, if it helps organize or explain a core set of phenomena that the ordinary terms are used to identify or describe (p. 225).

Indeed, I start from such a core set of phenomena that I think unites the interests in integration of many migration scholars: structural inequalities specific to contexts of immigration. Hence, my framework of relational integration starts from *egalitarian concerns*. Note that, from the outset, this is a different starting point than that of the nativist civic integrationist discourse, which seems to be interested in integration because of concerns of unity, security, survival, as well as the protection of allegedly liberal values.

The normative starting point of my proposed framework is that integration problems are problems of structural inequality specific to contexts of immigration. These inequalities do not only concern socioeconomic inequalities, but also extend to political issues (e.g. democratic representation) and cultural issues (e.g. religious rights) (Alba & Foner 2015; Waters & Pineau 2015). Yet, 'structural inequality' in itself is not precise enough. Throughout the previous chapters, I have argued against an understanding of integration in which the integration problem is portrayed as a problem of immigrants who need to become 'equal to non-immigrants' because they are currently 'lacking behind', and need to be 'elevated', such that non-immigrants become the benchmark for the integration of immigrants.

Therefore, based on theories of relational equality (E. Anderson 1999; Fourie et al. 2015), I propose we think of integration problems as problems of *inegalitarian relations* amongst members of a society. Integration problems, I argue, are a subset of problems of relational inequality. I first give a short outline of the concept of relational (in)equality (5.2.1), before elaborating on why integration should be understood as a subset of problems of relational inequality (5.2.2), and not, primarily, as a *distributive inequality* problem (5.2.3).

### 5.2.1 Relational (in)equality

Unlike frameworks of distributive equality, relational equality is not primarily concerned with the equal distribution of goods (material or immaterial) but rather with the relationships in which these goods are distributed (E. Anderson 1999; Fourie et al. 2015; Garrau & Laborde 2015;

Scheffler 2003; Schemmel 2012).

*Relational inequality* emerges where inegalitarian relations constitute superior and inferior social positions that constitute unequal distributions of opportunities, freedoms, and access to specific resources, while also providing a justification for these inequalities (E. Anderson 1999 p. 312; see also Tilly 1999, 2005). The notion of inegalitarian relations refers to relations in which some people are, for whatever reasons, deemed inferior to others: they are considered less worthy as moral agents, less capable as participants within a community, and less appropriate advocates of critique on, or change of the inegalitarian relations as they currently are. Such relations constitute all kinds of harms that can broadly be summarized under Young's (1990) five faces of oppression: those of superior rank are thought entitled to 'dominate, exploit, marginalize, demean, and inflict violence upon others' (E. Anderson 1999 p. 213). Thereby, not only does relational inequality establish a foundation for structural inequality in a socioeconomic outcomes, it also forms a constraint on the capacity to change these unequal and unjust relationships, and thereby has self-reinforcing consequences (see Hayward 2000; Stahl 2017; Young 2011). On the contrary, *relational equality* is constituted by egalitarian relations in which people enjoy social standing as equals, which is to say they acknowledge and treat each other as equals. These egalitarian relations are to be established not only in interpersonal contact, but also in formal and informal institutions (see also Schemmel 2012 p. 124).

There is a great deal of discussion about the characteristics of an egalitarian relation (cf. Fourie et al. 2015). Some political philosophers focus mainly on the political, democratic aspect of egalitarian relations. Anderson (1999) for example argues that:

To stand as an equal before others in discussion means that one is entitled to participate, that others recognize an obligation to listen respectfully and respond to one's arguments, that no one need bow and scrape before others or represent themselves as inferior to others as a condition of having their claim heard (p. 313).

Scheffler (2015) follows her line when he states that:

a society of equals is characterised by a reciprocal commitment on the part of each member to treat the equally important interests of every other member as exerting equal influence on social decisions (p. 35)

Other scholars have emphasized more social and emotional aspects of egalitarian relations, accentuating issues of solidarity, love, and care (Baker 2015).

What most advocates of relational equality share is the conviction that relational equality is more demanding than the recognition of people's 'equal moral worth', which in many egalitarian theories functions as a floor of 'basic respect', below which no-one should fall (Baker

2015 p. 69). Instead, relational equality encompasses a more positive form of mutual respect that is referred to as 'social honour' (Weber 1946 p. 180) or social esteem (Fourie 2015). This is not to say that everyone in a society should automatically hold the same amount of esteem, but it does require that all members have *equal opportunities* for acquiring esteem or honour.

It is not my aim to provide a picture of the perfect egalitarian relationship in all its aspects. As touched upon briefly in the introduction, relational egalitarians tend to define egalitarian relations as the negation of inegalitarian relations (Wolff 2015 p. 209). I follow this line of thinking: relational equality is characterised by the absence of those inegalitarian relations that constitute structural hierarchies in terms of social esteem and power, through which (categories of) people are oppressed, are attributed second-class status, and are excluded from access to resources (both material and immaterial) (Fourie et al. 2015).

### 5.2.2 *Integration problems as a subset of relational inequality*

Throughout the previous chapters I have argued that our conception of the inequality problem in contexts of immigration should not be analysed as a problem of 'variations in the possession of human capital' (Emirbayer 1997), thereby limiting the core of the integration problem to 'immigrants having less of something', such as education, social capital, or political participation. Doing so, I have argued, one misses the relational elements of recognition or acknowledgement that are inherently part of integration processes, and instead reinforces the notion of integration as an individual characteristic, through which those immigrants who are 'not integrated' are marked as deviant and need to be fixed. I thereby explicitly distance relational integration from the notion that integration involves immigrants striving for proximity to non-immigrants, in which 'integrated migrants' are those who are 'most able to thrive under institutions that are potentially very exclusive' (Stanley 2017 p. 37).<sup>74</sup>

Taking a framework of relational (in)equality as the foundation for a conception of integration allows us to intrinsically incorporate the relational elements in our understanding of integration problems and processes.<sup>75</sup> I conceptualize relational integration problems as problems of inegalitarian or hierarchical relations amongst people that arise in contexts of immigration, and constitute superior and inferior positions within society.<sup>76</sup> So, when investigating problems of relational integration, we analyse the emergence and transformation of hierarchical relations that are specific for contexts of immigration. Relational integration is

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74 See also Gassan Hage's (2000) critique on the assumptions of white supremacy in many understandings of multiculturalism.

75 Recall that the recognition element has been brought forward by, for example, Penninx & Mascareñas-Garcés (2016) and Alba & Foner (2015), but always as a condition for 'the integration of immigrants', thereby reducing it to an external factor.

76 Importantly, I do not take society as a wholistic entity that can act as such, but rather as a sum of relational interactions. These relations can generate certain mechanisms and patterns, such that 'society' can be relevant as a level of analysis, without reifying it as an actor or a normative entity.

thereby not just concerned with inequality as separateness or imbalance, but with oppression and subordination (see also Stanley 2017 p. 35).

In doing so, the notion of *membership relations* in a community, society and polity is particularly important. I use membership in this context not as an individual possession or characteristic, but as a concept that expresses a relationship between individuals and a larger social entity, as well as amongst the individuals that make up this entity (see Bauböck 2017). These relations give meaning to the notion of membership, and notions like 'the immigrant' and 'the non-immigrant' are only meaningful through these relations with other members and the larger social entity.

Membership relations are particularly relevant in contexts of immigration since immigration, in our current geopolitical system of national borders and national citizenship regimes, by definition triggers a transition in terms of membership relations: people who previously did not reside in a territory, did not participate in its institutions and were not subject to the rules of its polity, transition into people who do and who are.<sup>77</sup> When people start to reside within a specific territory, they inherently become part of these membership relations.

For relations amongst members to be egalitarian, the arrival and settlement of new members should entail a reconstruction of membership relations on an egalitarian basis: 'If someone is a member of society, then society belongs to them as much as to anyone else, and the common institutions that govern that society should be as responsive to their interests and perspectives as to anyone else's' (Bloemraad et al. 2019 p. 86). Yet empirically we see that the full benefits of membership are not automatically extended to newcomers, either immediately or over time, because immigrants are not acknowledged as equals in terms of membership by their fellow members or the institutions that constitute and regulate these membership relations (Bloemraad et al. 2019; Bonjour & Block 2016; Sadeghi 2019).

This, I argue, is where relational integration problems emerge. Relational integration problems are constituted by inequalitarian relations in which the notion of a migration background underpins inequalities amongst the members of society, such that some, often those who are categorised as migrants or as people with a migration background, do not enjoy social standing as equal members.<sup>78</sup>

The equality problem that underpins our concerns for relational integration is thereby shifted from 'the inequality of unintegrated immigrants' to 'the inequalities constituted by unintegrated membership relations'. This means we are not analysing integration problems of individuals or collectives of individuals, but rather a dynamic, relational process that unfolds amongst people. In doing so, the framework is in line with the general starting point of relational sociology, in which research does not focus on individuals isolated from their interactions with

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77 Depending on the rules of the specific border regime, this transition potentially starts before actual immigration.

78 I further elaborate on conditions for membership from a relational integration perspective in 5.4.2.

others, but rather on relational processes (Emirbayer 1997 p. 287). Elias has compared such a relational approach to a game, which he argues does not just consist of players and rules that can be insulated from each other, but 'the changing pattern created by the players as a whole, . . . the totality of their dealings in their relationships with each other' (Elias 1978 p. 130). Similarly, I argue that we should not think of integration as a static characteristic that can be ascribed to individuals in isolation from each other. Instead, it concerns a changing pattern of relations amongst all members of a society.

Before I elaborate further on these hierarchical membership relations, I remark on the distinction between a distributive and a relational approach to integration and (in)equality.

### 5.2.3 *Relational vs. distributive equality in integration problems*

Relational and distributive equality are likely to be empirically, if contingently, linked. Certain levels of distributive equality could enhance people's standing in society in a way that is constitutive of relational equality.<sup>79</sup> The other way around, relational equality is likely to enhance distributive equality by eliminating some important reasons people may have to treat others poorly or to exclude them from access to resources. Distributive equality may be a condition for relational equality in some ways, and an outcome in others. Distributive equality is therefore positively correlated with relational integration. Yet, while these forms of equality are likely to be empirically linked, they do not necessarily coincide, and distributive equality should not be used as a proxy for relational integration.

The main issue with a distributive outlook on equality is that it cannot attend to power and status differences independently of their distributive consequences (Schemmel 2012 p. 125). And indeed, we can think of situations in which distributive outcomes are equal, whereas the relations amongst people in which such distributions are being made, are not. I argue that we should not, and generally do not, think of situations in which distributive equality is not backed up by egalitarian relations as 'integrated'.

First, distributive equality without relational equality is not likely to be a stable outcome. Equal levels of employment may for example be reached temporarily in times of economic prosperity. Yet, as long as hierarchical membership relations continue to exist, an economic or political crisis may change this equal position: those categorized as immigrants may be the first to lose their jobs or suffer all other kinds of social harms. The attainment of some state of distributive equality is therefore not necessarily an indication that full integration has been accomplished.

Second, distributive equality could be attained through redistribution – of either opportunities or outcomes (Schemmel 2012). Redistribution, however, does not necessarily put an end to the inegalitarian relations within which material and immaterial goods were distributed

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<sup>79</sup> Empirically, it may even be a necessary condition for the enhancement of social standing.

in the first place. Imagine a situation in which ‘immigrants’ achieve equal opportunities in terms of employment through arrangements of affirmative action. As long as their colleagues do not grant them equal social standing, there could still be oppression within the workplace without this being immediately reflected in the employment numbers. There would not be relational equality amongst the employees in this workplace. Moreover, people may grant their colleagues even less social standing if they (suspect they) have been hired through affirmative action schemes, thereby creating a backlash of even deeper relational inequality.<sup>80</sup> From an egalitarian perspective, we should not consider such workspaces as ‘integrated’. Addressing problems of distributive equality thereby does not touch upon the core of the inequality problem but instead on the *effects* of distributive schemes.

Again, some extent of distributive equality is likely to be a necessary condition for relational equality, and therefore also for relational integration. My arguments for a relational approach to equality and integration is not an argument to completely disregard distributive equality altogether. However, a framework of distributive equality does not point us to the core problems of integration, and too much of an emphasis on the distribution of opportunities and outcomes, may lead to unwarranted conclusions about the central problems of integration, as well as the solutions for these problems – particularly about their sufficiency for solving the issue. By drawing our attention to issues of power and status, a research focus on the relations in which distributions are taking place provides a more comprehensive outlook on the integration problem.

### 5.3 Hierarchical membership relations

In the previous section, I have argued for a normative understanding of the integration problem as a problem of hierarchical membership relations in the context of immigration, constituting superior and inferior positions in society. Empirical research on relational integration should thus be analysing the workings of these hierarchical membership relations. In this section, I discuss an important empirical mechanism for the studying of such relations: processes of *legitimation*. In sociology, legitimation refers to recognition processes of the value of an entity (either a person, an action, or a situation), which results in a generalized perception of whether an entity is appropriate, desirable, or ‘as it should be’ within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, practices, and procedures (Johnson et al. 2006; Lamont 2012; Suchman 1995 p. 574; Zelditch 2001 p. 33).<sup>81</sup> For example, what makes an object valuable as a ‘work of art’ is socially constructed, depending on a system of norms, values, beliefs, practices, and procedures. Based on this system, a painting can have more or less legitimacy as a work of art.

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<sup>80</sup> For an excellent study on this matter, see Pierce’s (2003) ‘Racing for Innocence’.

<sup>81</sup> See also Haslanger’s (2014) discussion on what is ‘normatively normal’.

Similarly, we can empirically observe how people living within a certain territory are ascribed more or less legitimacy as a member of that society.<sup>82</sup> The legitimacy of membership pertains to the extent to which people are perceived and treated as 'rightful' members of a society, such that their membership is deemed appropriate, desirable, and 'as it should be'. As such, it is connected to general ideas, norms, and institutions that concern the deservingness of, and entitlement to, the benefits that this membership offers. To question someone's legitimacy as a member means to question someone's worthiness as a member, their entitlement to the social advantages of this membership,<sup>83</sup> the appropriateness of their participation in the decision-making procedures of the community,<sup>84</sup> and to downgrade the importance of their perspectives on and interests in these decision-making processes. It provides a classification scheme for hierarchies amongst members of a society, in terms of worthiness, deservingness, appropriateness, and entitlement, which makes it a significant manifestation of a relational integration problem.

Through processes of legitimation, a social hierarchy of different categories of members emerges, some of which are deemed superior to others.<sup>85</sup> It is important to note that these categories are not just mental constructs, but consist of socially negotiated boundaries within societies, and the (ever-changing) relations across those boundaries (Tilly, 2005 p. 100). These boundaries have very real consequences: they function as a network of social relations that constrain and enable actors, 'particularly by granting differential access to resources, opportunities, and norm-crafting and rule-making positions of authority' (Stanley 2017 p. 9), thereby constituting privileged and disadvantaged positions (see also Hayward 2000). The

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82 Note that such mechanisms inherently make 'society' into something that one can be more or less a part of, rather than a totality of interactions between people.

83 Current research on immigration and welfare solidarity is investigating the 'anti-solidarity effect', through which people would become less supportive towards the welfare state in general because welfare benefits would go to 'immigrants', whom they consider to be 'undeserving recipients' (e.g. Burgoon & Rooduijn 2020). This signifies a hierarchy in the legitimacy of membership: people with a migration background are seen as less deserving of the benefits of membership, because of this migration background.

84 An illustration is provided by the discussion around the candidacy of Moroccan-born Khadija Arib as Speaker of the Dutch House of Commons in 2016. While taking the responsibility for the course of the political debate in the most important democratic institution of a country could be seen as a sign of dedication and engagement, Arib's aspirations were questioned because of her 'migration background'. Next to the more obvious attacks from the populist party leader Geert Wilders, several prominent journalists questioned the legitimacy of Arib's candidacy in mainstream newspapers and talkshows. *De Volkskrant* questioned whether she could be sufficiently neutral in guiding debates concerning 'Morocco' (<https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/dubbele-nationaliteit-achilleshiel-van-zelfverzekerde-arib-beab467f6/>) and in *Buitenhof*, Arib was asked whether *she* was endangering the status of the Speaker of the House by 'giving rise to' the discussion about her Moroccan background. Arib was not automatically seen as entitled to hold this democratically important position in the Dutch polity (<https://www.groene.nl/artikel/bij-gelijke-geschied-voor-zitter-arib>).

85 In the context of racial inequality in the US, this has also been depicted in Lebron's (2013) understanding of 'social value', which is 'meant to denote the way narratives, power, and values coalesce around racial identity thereby serving to justify blacks' lower normative standing – they are not accorded equal concern, respect, or civic consideration' (2013 p. 44).

more consensus there is on the social reality of these boundaries, the more they are revealed in (relatively) stable patterns of behaviour: they become 'objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities' (Lamont & Molnár 2002 p.168).

The participation paradox, as discussed in chapter 3 of this dissertation, provides an illustration of the dynamics that such legitimation processes bring about. Weide and I have shown how the Danish government communicates that a 'real citizen', i.e. someone who is ascribed legitimacy as a member, is an *active citizen*. Yet, simultaneously, we see that someone 'being a migrant' is portrayed as a motive to fear people's participation – which triggers discussions concerning the voting rights of third country residents, as well as debates about the (religious) content of political claims of people with a migration background. The legitimacy of the membership of people with a migration background is questioned: they are not irrefutably perceived as desirable or appropriate participants in the Danish polity and some (alleged) political claims are even explicitly marked as inappropriately religious.<sup>86</sup> This then signals a problem of relational integration: we find hierarchical relations in which the notion of a 'migration background' underpins inequalities amongst the members of society, such that the membership of those categorized 'immigrants' is questioned, and they do not enjoy social standing as equals.

The legitimacy of membership is not ascribed to people in a binary sense that either one has legitimacy as a member or one does not. Instead, it works as a scale on which members enjoy a more superior or inferior status which, as I further outline below, is also intersectionally constructed. For people who enjoy virtually no legitimacy, their sheer presence in a territory can be problematized, while for others, their presence may be tolerated as long as they lay low and do not ask for specific benefits or rights. It is perfectly well possible to be granted a right to be somewhere, *as long as one does not expect social standing as equals*. We can think for example of situations in which the presence of certain communities of labour immigrants is tolerated or even welcomed, as long they take on the jobs that no one else wants. Or the presence of refugees could be tolerated as proof of the benevolence and generosity of the receiving society. Yet, people may start to actively question the legitimacy of membership as soon as labour immigrants start to find better positions in the labour market, or if refugees do not express enough gratitude for being granted asylum and instead voice critiques about the ways in which governments deal with their situations.

While, for the purpose of revising our understanding of integration, I am particularly interested in structural inequalities in contexts of immigration, distinctions between legitimate and non-legitimate members can be based on many different characteristics, and are highly

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<sup>86</sup> Research by Verkuuyten, Hindriks and Coenders (2016) similarly suggests that 'non-immigrants' have a strong preference for 'immigrants' to be either politically passive, or, less enthusiastically, have them participate in mainstream parties, but not to found new parties that represent their perspectives and interests.

contextual and fluid. The 'legitimate member' is not per definition a synonym for the 'non-immigrant', nor is the 'non-legitimate member' automatically an 'immigrant'. Racial, gender, and class relations, for example, can intersect with a migration background and affect the acquisition of legitimate membership. Moreover, these social markers can, each in their own ways, provide foundations for distinctions between legitimate and non-legitimate members that have nothing to do with immigration. One can think for example of homeless people, felons, or people with severe intellectual disabilities as categories designated as non-legitimate members of a society.

This intersectionality has two implications for analysing relational integration. First, just as we should not assume that everything immigrant-related is about integration, we should not assume that relational integration necessarily revolves around immigration-related issues *only*.<sup>87</sup> When investigating the hierarchical membership relations as they are found within a specific empirical immigration context, we may find that other aspects than 'migration background' play an important role in the attribution of legitimate membership: whereas societies may be happy to acknowledge some immigrants as legitimate members, they may be more reluctant about others. Recent research shows how people with a migration background are racialized to different degrees (Balibar 2007; Erel et al. 2016; De Genova 2018; Grosfoguel et al. 2015; Yanow & Van Der Haar 2013), how gender intersects with migration background (Bonjour & de Hart 2013; Korteweg 2017; Roggeband & Verloo 2007; Sadeghi 2019; Yuval-Davis 1993), and how class affects which immigrants are problematized and which are not (Bonjour & Chauvin 2018; Bonjour & Duyvendak 2018). Intersectional analysis is therefore crucial when investigating relational integration (see also Yuval-Davis 2007).

Second, the framework of relational integration could potentially be used to investigate other forms of relational inequality beyond immigration contexts, in which distinctions between legitimate and non-legitimate members constitute inegalitarian relations between members of a society. This is not unique to my framework: in the American context, integration is mostly referred to as a racial issue, as a reparation of the relations between black and white Americans (e.g. E. Anderson 2010; Freixas & Abott 2019; Stanley 2017). While I focus on the specifics of immigration contexts in this chapter, the reader may find certain aspects of the framework to be applicable beyond the studies of migration.

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<sup>87</sup> See also Dahinden's (2016) plea for the 'demigrantization of migration research'.

## 5.4 Integrated membership relations

As explained in the introduction of this dissertation, my framework starts from theorizing the *problem* of integration, rather than painting a picture of an ideally integrated society. I do so, first, because I expect there is not one unique model of a fully integrated society. Depending on the social and historical context of a specific society, there may be several ways in which social relations can work such that one would consider them integrated. Second, I have argued, it keeps us closer to the real-world integration problems that we want to solve than an ideal-theory approach could.

If, however, we want to make any claims about potential progress in terms of relational integration processes in a specific empirical certain context, we need some sort of an evaluative standard of what relational integration as a positive goal entails. Any statement on how integration as a process 'works' – any claim on the conditions of successful integration or any measurement of integration – is, at least tacitly, based on such an understanding of 'completed integration', or an end state. If we want to conduct relational integration research and make such statements, we need an idea of what 'more' or 'less' integration looks like.

This is why I propose to use a negation of the relational integration problem as such a standard, so that we have a beginning of an understanding of *integrated membership relations*,<sup>88</sup> without diverting towards an ideal-theory framework. Relational integration is attained when membership relations are characterised by *the absence of the status hierarchies and corresponding social boundaries of membership* in which some members, often those who are categorized as 'immigrants', are degraded to second-class members. Relational integration thus involves moving away from thinking in differentiations of legitimate membership. Migration background would not provide any foundation for a hierarchy of superior and inferior members. All residents of a bounded territory are – on an abstract level – acknowledged as equals within the 'imagined community' (Benedict Anderson 1991), and are treated accordingly.

Integrated membership relations involve some form of *recognition or acknowledgement as equals*. This recognition or acknowledgement is not a distributive issue, something that people *have* more or less of, but concerns a relationship between acknowledgers and acknowledged that is constituted through (institutional) interactions. Note that the notions of the acknowledged and the acknowledger pertain to *roles*, not to two distinguishable *groups* with attributes that are determined independent from this very relationship. They are different roles that are taken on by the same people simultaneously, within the relational process of acknowledgement. We can only understand these roles through this transactional process, never in isolation from each other (see also Emirbayer 1997 p. 296).

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<sup>88</sup> I explicitly do not refer to 'integrated membership' as an individual possession, such that an individual's membership can be integrated or non-integrated. Doing so, we would circle back to an integration conception in which integration is used as a descriptive for individuals rather than a descriptive for social relations.

Below, I first elaborate on the social, political, and legal aspects of such integrated membership relations (5.4.1). Then I turn to the questions of *who* would need to be acknowledged as equals for relational integration to be attained (*the acknowledged* – 5.4.2.), and *who* would need to take on the role of *the acknowledger* of others as equals (5.4.3).

#### 5.4.1 Social, political, and legal aspects of integrated membership relations

Socially, if membership relations are integrated – i.e. characterised by acknowledgement as equals – all members are seen as entitled to use the resources that are offered within a society and to ‘take up space’,<sup>89</sup> i.e. are entitled to be present and to be successful, rather than expected to lay low and to be humble. They are seen as deserving of making a good life for themselves and are granted access to the resources that are on offer for this, without, for example, receiving accusations of ‘stealing jobs’ or wealth from others who would be more entitled to them. On the other hand, members also get the space to be ‘unsuccessful’. In times of need, they are seen as entitled to, and deserving of, the advantages of membership that are supposed to help members in disadvantaged positions, such as welfare arrangements in cases of unemployment. A ‘migration background’ would not be a motive to ask anyone, either formally or informally, to provide any extra proof that they are deserving of such benefits, nor would they need to display any extra gratitude for receiving them.

Politically, all members are seen as entitled to participate in the decision-making processes within a society, and to have their perspectives and interests equally weighed in these decision-making processes.<sup>90</sup> All members are seen as entitled to utter critique and be judgmental of the polity, rather than being expected to be grateful for whatever goods and resources the polity grants them. Again, this goes further than formal participation rights: all members are seen as entitled to strive for change, to mobilize others for protest, to run for office, etc. On the other hand, all members are also equally allowed to *not* participate. To what extent political passivity is accepted in general will depend on the specific citizenship norms of a country (Dalton 2008). Yet, as argued in chapter 3, if the passivity of people with a ‘migration background’ is taken as a reason to question the legitimacy of their membership, while the passivity of ‘non-immigrants’ is not, this indicates a distinction in the legitimacy of membership that is problematic in terms of relational integration.

Both the social and the political aspect of integrated membership relations depend, to some extent, on legal membership (often in the form of national citizenship), since legal membership generally provides social and political rights that one does not enjoy without this status. In that sense, it is a necessary condition for integrated membership relations. Nevertheless,

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<sup>89</sup> See also T.H. Marshall's classic description of the social aspect of citizenship: ‘I mean the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society’ (2014 p. 58).

<sup>90</sup> This comes close to Fraser's (2010) conception of ‘participatory parity’.

I emphasize that an extension of formal citizenship is not a sufficient condition for integrated membership relations. Legal citizenship is in no way a guarantee of being acknowledged as an equal.<sup>91</sup> Bloemraad et al. (2019), for example, have recently drawn our attention to how the extension of legal citizenship to newcomers has actually been accompanied with a tightening of ideas of who deserves to benefit from the advantages of legal membership.

The other way around, I do not wish to suggest that societies could become more integrated by removing citizenship from 'undesirable members', such that they would not need to be taken into consideration when investigating the relational equality of membership relations. In this latter dynamic, we see that not only does legal citizenship potentially affect one's legitimacy as a member, but also that hierarchies in the legitimacy of membership can affect the eligibility for acquiring citizenship too (Shachar 2014). Dumbraва (2015) for example analyses how governments of 38 European states give some foreigners (whom he calls 'super-foreigners') preferential treatments in terms of citizenship acquisition, while they restrict the citizenship rights of some categories of citizens (whom he calls 'sub-citizens'). The distinction between legitimate and non-legitimate members does not just start after immigration, and is also relevant before a potential moment of entry. It affects the workings of border regimes and as such, who is even allowed to immigrate in the first place.

#### 5.4.2 *The acknowledged*

For relational integration to be attained, membership relations need to be egalitarian. But who is part of the category 'members' who would need to be acknowledged as equals in order for this to happen? For now, I sideline the discussion on the justification of border regimes in general, and on the extent to and conditions under which states would be justified in *not* allowing people into their territory. I limit the framework to those who are already present: everyone who resides in a country for any considerable amount of time should be acknowledged as an equal member for relational integration to be attained.

Following Carens' (2015) theory of social membership, I confine the members of a society to those who reside with some permanence in a territory and thereby make up a collection of people who are subject to the same political and social institutions, and are likely to develop meaningful social connections with other members and with these institutions.<sup>92</sup> Hence, the category 'members' does not equal 'citizens', but instead 'residents'.

While the theory of social membership builds on social connections to other members

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<sup>91</sup> This is further demonstrated by research on internal migration, which shows that people who migrate within a country, and thus automatically hold formal citizenship in the region they migrate to, can still be perceived and treated as non-legitimate members, and sometimes even be practically denied the rights that their national citizenship legally grants them (see e.g. Abbas (2016) on internal migration and citizenship in India).

<sup>92</sup> In our current geopolitical system that is built on national states, citizenship regimes and a prevalence of the national polity, the relevant level of analysis will often be the residents of a national territory, but the framework is not necessarily limited to integration on the national level.

and to institutions as the normative foundation of membership. Carens explicitly argues that we should not focus on the actualisation of such connections and, instead, take residency and time as a proxy (p.166). I agree with Carens that it would be undesirable to take the actualisation of social connections as a foundation for membership - who would be the judge of what are 'enough' meaningful connections to qualify as a member? (p.166) It is likely, as Carens argues, that unfair biases, based on for example gender, class, and race would play a role in the assessment of the 'connectedness' of potential members (Ibid.). Hence, he takes residency together with time as a proxy for a form of investment in a community and an interest in the benefits of its membership, *in the absence of a better alternative*:

We know that it is much easier for immigrants to be seen as members of society when the immigrants resemble most of the existing population with respect to race, ethnicity, religion, lifestyles, values, and so on. But these are not morally acceptable criteria of social membership. Leave the issue of immigration aside for a moment. Every society contains minorities who differ from the majority in significant ways, even though these minorities may be able to trace their ancestry in the country back several generations. From the perspective of democratic principles, it is not acceptable to call the social membership of these minorities into question. It is the same for immigrants and their descendants. The fact that they are often different from the existing population in various ways is no justification for refusing to see them as members of society. If the state attempts to use criteria of membership beyond residence and length of stay, that is almost inevitably what happens. If states wish to avoid morally objectionable forms of discrimination, they must rely only on residence and length of time in allocating rights and ultimately citizenship itself (pp. 166-7).

Indeed, taking the social connections that people have actualized as a condition for membership, resonates with the discourses of civic integrationism and the notion of active citizenship that I have criticized throughout this dissertation. It invokes questions of which immigrants qualify to be members, of what constitutes enough engagement with 'society', and what type of connections are considered to be meaningful for a connection to 'society'.

From the outset, I want to emphasize that the resident category will not be clear-cut. First, residency may be temporal because people are mobile. Second, under the influence of globalization, physical residency may not always be the most prevalent defining aspect of who forms a community, and who is subject to its institutions and political rules (Bauböck & Guiraudon 2009).<sup>93</sup> Further, the category comprises people in very different situations: people who have never lived elsewhere; people who have migrated; people who hold legal citizenship;

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<sup>93</sup> E-government and digital membership, which has been initiated in Estonia for example (Björklund 2016), provides a situation in which our classic understanding of residency may not be immediately helpful. Still, some form of 'digital presence' could probably substitute physical presence in such cases of membership.

people who have a legal status as resident but no citizenship; people residing in a country without any formal permission to do so, and probably many more variations on these themes. These legal situations constitute different forms of relational integration problems, in which the social, political and legal dimensions of membership as discussed above constitute different integration dynamics.

It is therefore not my aim to come up with some set-in-stone rules to demarcate 'the resident' in order to cover every specific case of presence or absence in a territory. Whether and to what extent the absence of recognition – also referred to as *misrecognition* – of people as equals in terms of membership constitutes a problem for relational integration will be context-dependent: we will need to keep analysing empirically where such boundaries are drawn, and whether, and to what degree, we find these boundaries justifiable from a perspective of relational integration.

### 5.4.3 *The acknowledger*

Relational integration requires that all residents of a territory are acknowledged as equals. This raises the additional question: *acknowledged by whom?* Whose acknowledgement is required for membership relations to be integrated?

First, I need to emphasize that the acknowledger is not necessarily an individual. Acknowledgement, as an intersubjective, relational issue (see also 2.2.2) is also, and substantially so, concerned with institutional acknowledgement. Membership relations are constituted, reinforced, and transformed through formal and informal institutions, such as norms, policies and symbols, which cannot be reduced to the intentions or actions of individual persons (see also Haslanger's (2005) discussion on the failures of methodological individualism). The ways in which institutions treat people is an important aspect of any framework on relational equality (see Schemmel 2012 p. 135): institutions can fail in acknowledging people as equals by treating them with hostility, contempt, or neglect. The ways in which such institutions constitute (in) egalitarian membership relations would be an important focus of relational integration research.

This is not to say that individual acknowledgers are of no importance: institutions are inhabited by individuals (see also Lebron 2013), and individual interactions can change the courses of institutions.<sup>94</sup> Ideally, integrated membership relations are constituted by *all residents* acknowledging *all residents* as equals. Yet, empirically, the denial of such acknowledgement, also referred to as *misrecognition*, by one individual is not likely to significantly affect someone's overall social standing in a society. An individual's refusal to acknowledge others as their equals may not be a relational integration problem in and of itself. Like with the category of 'the acknowledged', there is no a priori theoretical answer to the question of who exactly need to acknowledge a person as equal for them to have the social standing as equals in a society. Instead,

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<sup>94</sup> Recall my critique in chapter 2 that non-immigrants are generally only investigated as a structural external factor to the integration of immigrants, thereby not being ascribed any agency in integration processes.

the framework provides the theoretical starting point that *not acknowledging others as equals* is a potential integration problem. Whether and to what extent this is a problem empirically would need to be investigated empirically. Important part of the relational integration research agenda would be to analyse the ways in which the relations between institutions and individuals affect the overall hierarchies of membership within societies, and the notion of misrecognition would be a starting point for doing so.

When conducting such empirical investigations, there seem to be two main concerns. First, the position of the acknowledged in terms of (symbolic) power. Some people (and institutions) have more important gate-keeping functions, which makes the impact of their (mis)recognition more significant than of others. People whose own legitimacy as a member is being questioned, for example, are likely to be less influential in their acknowledgement of others than people who are considered fully legitimate members.

Second, we should be concerned with the degree to which misrecognition follows a structured pattern. Here the notion of accumulative harm (Mason 2015) is useful. As long as misrecognition takes on an incidental form, it will not affect the equality of membership relations in any substantial way. However, when these forms of misrecognition are not incidental, as they often are not, and instead are part of a broader pattern, they start to become a problem for relational integration. Together, these individual instances have an accumulative effect that cannot be reduced to these individual refusals of acknowledgement, and are constitutive of the hierarchical membership relations that relational integration is concerned with.

There is no fixed answer to the question when individual misrecognition stops being incidental and starts being a pattern. Numerical qualifiers, such as 'a majority', do not suffice since small group of 'misrecognizers' may hold very powerful positions in a society through which their misrecognition could still constitute serious problems of relational integration.

## 5.5 Relational integration as a process: social transformation

Thus far, I have argued that relational integration as an end state involves non-hierarchical membership relations, in which members simultaneously take on the role of the acknowledged and the acknowledged. From this, I infer a conception of *integration processes* as processes of social change involving changes in the hierarchies of membership relations. Such changes can be integrative (less hierarchy) or disintegrative (more hierarchy). Normatively, I have argued, that all residents of a certain territory should be acknowledged as equals for membership relations to be fully egalitarian. The ways in which different actors (both individuals and institutions) would be involved in this process, as well as their impact on the outcomes in terms of acknowledgement, would be an empirical question that should take centre stage in investigations of relational integration. It is often emphasized that integration as a process is a form of intergenerational change

that requires time and patience (e.g. Alba et al. 2011; Esser 2004). Though it may be true that integration does not just happen overnight, we should refrain from portraying it as the overcoming of a temporal adaptation problem that naturally emerges through the arrival of newcomers, which will be resolved once people have become accustomed and adjusted to each other. For social change to be integrative, it needs to reduce hierarchies in terms of membership. As such, it may – depending on the rigidity of the hierarchy in question – require a very deep form of social change that is rather demanding for all members in a community.

Further, as outlined in the previous section, hierarchical membership relations are an intersectional problem, and immigration-related inequalities are infused with problems of, inter alia, racism, classism, and sexism. This makes relational integration a more ambiguous problem than one of temporal adaptation. We need to be careful not to portray the exclusion of immigrants as a temporary aberration in the functioning of polities that are otherwise democratic, liberal, and inclusive, thereby implying that things will go ‘back to normal’ once newcomers have ‘found their place’ in their new societies (see also Stanley, 2017, p. 63).

I therefore propose a conception of relational integration as a form of *social transformation*, which is to be understood as a profound, systemic form of change, and is to be distinguished from more marginal change at the surface of society (Castles 2001; Portes 2010). Relational integration involves challenging underlying assumptions of structural inequality, such as ideas of white supremacy or classist notions of who makes a legitimate citizen. These changes are not contextual factors for the ‘integration of immigrants’, but are an intrinsic part of what relational integration processes involve.

Importantly, not only does integration involve people *gaining* status, but it is also concerned with some *giving up* a position of being ‘a superior member’, i.e. giving up forms of status that are constituted by superiority over others, as well as potentially monopolized access to resources that is connected to this status. Relational integration can thereby be understood as an antonym of *social closure*, which Weber (2019 p.123) defined as a social mechanism through which groups with access to certain forms of capital protect their dominant position by excluding others from this access.

More superficial forms of change, such as spatial mixing, may be a necessary part of the integration process, but do not suffice for relational integration to be attained. Whereas spatial segregation may indeed fuel relational inequality (E. Anderson 2010), its opposite does not guarantee the realization of relational equality. Relational inequality may very well exist in mixed spaces (Stanley 2017). Hence, spatial mixing is not intrinsically relationally integrative: it may be instrumental to relational integration if it coincides with a decline in hierarchical membership relations.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Moreover, not only does social mixing not suffice for the attainment of integration, but too much of a focus on these superficial forms of change may be undesirable. The aim of social mixing may place an extra burden on people in inferior membership positions because they may lose the safety and opportunities provided by their

## 5.6 Implications for integration research

A relational conception of integration changes the outlook on where we situate integration, which has some serious implications for the starting point of integration research. Rather than the 'integration of immigrants', one investigates the integration of membership relations amongst people. Rather than taking integration as a characteristic of certain people who would be 'more' or 'less' integrated, we investigate integration as a configuration of membership relations, and the social phenomena in which they are expressed.

This focus on membership relations brings forth the crucial question of how to empirically investigate such relations. Where do we find the tangible social phenomena through which we can analyse the workings of these membership relations, and how do we capture them as dynamic and transactional phenomena, rather than static, substantive ones? A full answer to this question requires the development of a comprehensive relational sociological framework, which for now is outside the scope of this primarily conceptual project. However, I provide some initial suggestions.

In doing so, I emphasize that this shift in the conception of the integration problem, and, accordingly, in where integration is situated, would not necessarily mean the end of all research practices as we know them. Instead of completely reinventing the wheel, a first step would be to *reinterpret* various existing research practices. Throughout the dissertation I have argued that some studies that claim to investigate integration, particularly those analysing the enhancement of immigrants' human capital should *not* be depicted as studies of integration. However, there are also research endeavours that do not explicitly mention integration, whereas they could in fact be informative for an analysis of relational integration. This body of studies mostly comprises critical migration literature that analyses how discourses, policies, social norms, and interactions constitute and reiterate social boundaries between people. I end this chapter by providing some examples and showing how they could be informative for studying relational integration.

Critical discourse and policy analysis could be useful for diagnosing empirical relational *integration problems*. By scrutinizing discursive and policy categorizations, hierarchies in the legitimacy of membership can be exposed. Yanow and van der Haar (2013), for example, show how the Dutch government differentiated various categories of 'members of society' in an official taxonomy: autochthonous people (of Dutch heritage) and allochthonous people (of foreign birth).<sup>96</sup> They then investigate how this formal taxonomy interacted with the informal

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'segregated' networks. If the socially mixed environment does not provide them the advantages of relational equality, they may therefore be worse off in mixed spaces (Stanley 2017, p. 167).

<sup>96</sup> The latter category was further divided in Western and Non-Western 'allochtones', a distinction that strongly intersected with the Netherlands' colonial past. The Non-Western allochtones were then further differentiated in first and second generation 'Non-Western allochtones'. One qualified as allochtone if one parent had been

ways in which these terms were used. Their research findings make visible a manifestation of hierarchical membership relations, concerned with equal standing, that also intersect with issues of race:

The implications of the metaphoric entailments of the term pair are clear: the 'stuff' of which both allochthons and autochthons are made is built in — their identity is essential; and it is eternal — their 'origins' are always identifiable. No amount of time will turn an allochtoon into an autochtoon (pp. 246-247).

This form of critical policy and category analysis is an example of ways to make hierarchical membership relations tangible and as such, to empirically diagnose problems of relational integration. Similar forms of analysis could also be done in the field of media studies, scrutinising categories and hierarchical relations in news outlets, but also in cultural expressions such as TV shows, films and literature.

For analyses of the workings of *relational integration processes*, ethnographic research on boundary (un)making could provide interesting insights on membership relations. Take for example Wekker's (2017) study on top-down social interventions that aim to make people in an Amsterdam working-class neighbourhood more 'open' towards diversity. (These initiatives are, in fact, framed by social workers as aiming for 'mutual integration' (p. 93).) Wekker investigates the effects of these interventions in terms of people's experiences of diversity, and the boundaries between them. Her conclusions are not particularly optimistic. She shows how:

social relations and power dynamics continue to reflect long-institutionalized class, ethnic and racial distinctions despite the declining number of residents from the old, native white majority. Existing boundaries between the white, native Dutch and those labelled foreigners [...] are emphasized and indeed have been strengthened in the context of increased ethnic and racial diversity (p. 91).

Ethnographic research can provide insights into the interplay between institutions, interactions, and individual experiences in terms of membership relations and coinciding social boundaries.

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born in a foreign country. A person with two parents born in the Netherlands was categorized as autochtone, *except* for when one of their parents was a Non-Western allochtone. This person was then a second generation Non-Western allochtone. The category of 'Western allochtones' was not further broken down into generations, thereby implying that these did not need to be differentiated for several generations (Yanow & Van Der Haar 2013 p. 227).

## 5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued for a reconceptualization of the integration problem as a subset of relational inequality, i.e. a problem of inequality in the relations in which resources, freedoms, and welfare are distributed within a community or society. These inequalities, I have argued, constitute the normative wrong that makes integration a relevant subject for migration scholars, which in turn, gives direction to what type of social phenomena should be of interest, and why. More specific to contexts of immigration, I have pointed to hierarchical membership relations as the central issue for problems of relational integration. Immigration is prone to trigger questions of membership, since it inherently changes the composition of membership relations as they were. Empirically, we often see that immigrants and their offspring are not acknowledged as equals in terms of membership, and, accordingly, are not extended the formal and informal rights and benefits that membership entails. This, I argue, is what constitutes a relational integration problem.

I have then argued that social legitimation process, i.e. the processes in which people ascribe fellow residents various degrees of *legitimacy as a member*, provide important mechanisms for the investigation of these hierarchical membership relations. The 'legitimacy of membership' refers to the extent to which people are perceived and treated as 'rightful' members of a society, such that their membership is deemed appropriate, desirable, and 'as it should be'. These legitimacy processes constitute a relational integration problem: the idea that membership of a society is not a given (one either is a member or is not), but is gradual and conditional constitutes a hierarchy in membership relations through which some people are seen as superior members, and some as inferior.

For relational integration to be attained, all members should enjoy social standing as equals, not because they have somehow deserved it, but because they *are there*. Normatively, the attainment of relational integration as an end state involves moving away from thinking about membership in terms of legitimacy – away from membership as a status that should be bound to certain conditions such that we can rightfully make a distinction between 'real members' and 'questionable members'. Empirically, the overcoming of the underlying assumptions of what makes a legitimate member is likely to involve deeply intersectional process of change, in which nativist assumptions of legitimate membership are intertwined with racist, classist, and sexist notions of membership.

Crucially, the framework of relational integration does not take such dynamics as *contextual* to the integration problem and process. It does not take discrimination based on descent, race, or class as a problem *for the integration of immigrants*. Instead, it conceptualizes them as integration problems in and of themselves. This shifts the site of the integration problem and process from a problem sited in the immigrant, and a process that immigrants go through, to a problem sited in the relations amongst people within a society, and a process of

relational change.

This shift has its implications for integration research. Most current research approaches are catered towards investigating 'the integration of immigrants', and would need to remodel their methodology such as to capture this relational aspect of integration. The development of more concrete guidelines for such a remodelling are outside the scope of this dissertation. It requires further development of the relational integration framework, such that we can better grasp its ontological and methodological implications (I get back to this in the next chapter). However, I have also argued that there are research endeavours out there that are tacitly invested with relational integration, without explicitly mentioning integration at all. Part of the implications of this shift would involve a recalibration of what kind of research we consider to be *integration research*, such that we can use these insights for advancing our understanding of empirical cases of relational integration.





# Chapter 6



Conclusion

## 6.1 Introduction

Throughout this dissertation, I have discussed conceptual problems that are permeating conventional research approaches to integration. These conceptual problems, I have argued, reinforce a general research bias towards immigrants and disturb our understanding of the integration problem and the integration process. By way of conclusion, I return to these problems as outlined in chapter 1 – the problem of ‘integration dispensation’ (6.2) and the problem of differentiating integration from other social phenomena (6.3). For both problems, I provide a short recap of how they were diagnosed in chapters 2-4, and then discuss how a framework of relational integration, as introduced in chapter 5, should enable scholars to deal with these issues. In 6.4, I present some final remarks about dealing with civic integrationism in the field of migration studies. Then, I offer some suggestions for the further development of this framework (6.5). I end this conclusion by returning to my arguments for a revisionary strategy towards integration, encouraging critical scholars to (re-)embrace the concept, as to reclaim it from its civic integrationist use.

## 6.2 Discarding the non-immigrants’ ‘integration dispensation’

The first conceptual problem that runs through the analyses in this dissertation is that of the ‘integration dispensation’, through which non-immigrants are exempted from being an intrinsic part of the integration problem as well as the integration process. As a consequence of this dispensation, the integration problem is reduced to a problem that primarily concerns immigrants: only immigrants can ‘be integrated’ to various degrees, only immigrants ‘can have an integration problem’, and only immigrants can ‘go through an integration process’. The central research problem for conventional approaches to integration is the ‘(un)integratedness’ of immigrants, and is therefore situated with the immigrant.

As I argued in the introduction, the ways in which problems are conceptualized also give direction to the type of solutions that seem fitting for these problems. The integration dispensation is therefore not only problematic when it comes to determining the central problem of integration, it also risks reinforcing a bias towards immigrants when it comes to solutions for integration problems. They are the ones whose situation need to be enhanced, and so integration solutions tend to revolve around immigrants’ strategies improving their situations so as to ‘catch up with non-immigrants’.

Throughout chapters 2-4, I argued that a reconceptualization of integration ought to discard this dispensation, which most dominant approaches in the field still (tacitly) uphold. In chapter 2, I first argued why such an instrumental role for non-immigrants is unsatisfactory from a conceptual perspective. I argued that ‘one-way approaches’ to integration, in which

immigrants are the only active and responsible party in integration processes, are undesirable and infeasible. They are undesirable because they reinforce the civic integrationist assumptions about well-functioning, integrated, harmonious receiving societies that are threatened by the arrival of deviant immigrants. They are infeasible since there is no way in which immigrants can perform the act of recognition, a necessary condition for the attainment of integration, themselves.

Then, I showed that an increasing awareness amongst scholars about the importance of thinking about integration as a 'two-way process' has not yet resulted in the discarding of this integration dispensation, thereby leaving these approaches incapable of preventing the problems of one-wayness to seep through in their work. While the influence of non-immigrants on integration is in no way denied, their role is conceptually restricted to an instrumental one in which they can only influence the integration of others. Whereas non-immigrants can *cause* integration problems for others, they are not *attributed* integration problems.

The research endeavours that are based on such conceptions of integration (i.e. on an instrumental role of non-immigrants) do not, and cannot, completely get away from a research design that focuses primarily on the disadvantaged positions of immigrants, and on strategies to enhance these positions. Only those approaches that take a *relational perspective* to integration, such that people 'integrate with each other', discard the integration dispensation by actively involving non-immigrants in the integration process, rather than portraying them as an external factor for the integration of immigrants. Therefore, I argued, only a relational approach to integration can stay away from the undesirable and infeasible assumptions of one-way integration conceptions.

In chapter 3, I provided further argumentation for removing the integration dispensation through an empirical illustration of how 'the receiving society' plays an intrinsic part in the problems of structural inequalities that we associate with integration. Honing in on political integration in particular, Weide and I provided an analysis of the conditions under which immigrants participate in the Danish polity. We show that this participation is both restrained and tied to certain conditions, because immigrants are not considered to be equally competent participants and their participation is portrayed as a potential threat to the existence and character of the Danish polity. As such, immigrant political participation is in fact met with practices of othering that affect their democratic positions in the polity. This illustrates how more immigrant participation does not necessarily equal more integration: as long as immigrants are not acknowledged as equals in terms of their social standing as participants, participation may actually cause a backlash of exclusion. We cannot understand integration without investigating the acknowledgment as equals as a fundamental element of what integration entails. This means that non-immigrants are to be portrayed as an intrinsic part of the integration process, and that the integration dispensation needs to be discarded.

In chapter 4, I developed this argument further by scrutinizing the role of political participation for our understanding of integration, this time from a theoretical angle. After having distinguished and discussed six different potential reasons to value participation by immigrants and their potential link to integration, the central takeaway, again, has been that some form of acknowledgement as equals is a necessary condition for immigrant participation to be constitutive of political integration, whichever way we conceptualize the latter.

All in all, a conception of integration that (tacitly) endorses the integration dispensation for non-immigrants reinforces a research bias towards immigrants that has both objectionable normative implications, and simultaneously represents an incomplete understanding of the fundamental aspects of integration processes. Thus the first puzzle that I set for a revised understanding of integration was to deal with this acknowledgement and the role of the non-immigrant in our conception of integration. In other words: *how to conceptualize integration problems, such that non-immigrants are an intrinsic part of them?*

A relational approach, as introduced in chapter 5, actively rejects the integration dispensation for non-immigrants. Relational integration pertains to the integration of membership relations, rather than the ‘integration of immigrants’ (or the ‘integration of non-immigrants’, for that matter). These membership relations automatically involve non-immigrants as they are an intrinsic part of the constellation of membership relations in which integration takes place.

Investigating the integration of membership relations, rather than the integration of immigrants, thus changes the subject of integration research. In doing so, it should enable scholars to move away from the problems of one-wayness, as discussed in chapter 2. It does not portray society as a harmonious whole – on the contrary, it conceptualizes society as the product and site of the hierarchical membership relations under scrutiny. As such, relational integration situates integration problems at the very core of a society. Accordingly, it also does not conceptualize integration as a process in which immigrants need to gain proximity to some example that is set by this society. Relational integration processes involve resolving hierarchical membership relations within society, rather than immigrants living up to certain conditions in order to become part of a society. Last, because it focuses on the integration of relations amongst residents, relational integration does not reiterate a division between ‘people who need to integrate’, and ‘people for whom integration will never be an issue’ because relational integration is not something that can be ascribed to individuals in the first place. It thereby reduces the risk that migration scholars strengthen the stigma of the ‘unintegrated migrant’ that has gained such momentum in current civic integrationist discourse.

### 6.3 Differentiating integration from other immigrant-related phenomena

The second conceptual problem running through this dissertation's analyses is that many approaches to integration take the involvement of immigrants as a sufficient condition for a phenomenon to be an issue of integration, without providing sufficient theoretical explanation for this inferred relationship. In doing so, I have argued, it remains unclear what integration is a problem of, why we should be investigating it, and what specific phenomena we should be interested in when doing so.

In chapter 2, I discussed several dominant approaches in migration studies that take 'immigrants enhancing their human capital' as an indicator for integration taking place, without explaining in much detail how this human capital is theoretically linked to integration. In chapter 4, I examined a specific instance of this tendency by honing in on the potential theoretical assumptions behind research endeavours that take immigrants' political participation as a proxy for political integration. I showed that, though there may be several reasons to be interested in immigrants' political participation, none of these are appropriately related to political integration to use it as a proxy: they either presuppose that integration is a process aimed at fixing immigrants' deficiencies, or they cannot account for the fact that the realization of what makes participation valuable for integration always depends on the institutionalization of some form of political equality in the polity. Whereas immigrant participation may be informative for some understandings of integration, it is not an adequate proxy.

It is therefore important that we think through *why* we would be interested in specific phenomena in the name of integration. The field needs a more solid theoretical framework to give direction to this question. We need to think through what is it we know about integration, once we know how much immigrants participate politically, how many non-immigrants friends they have, or how well they are doing in terms of educational attainment. Similarly, we need to think through what it is we know about integration once we compare those data to similar data about non-immigrants. Scholars should not automatically assume that their work is relevant in terms of integration, just because they are investigating immigrants' participation, social identification, language acquisition, etc. These theoretical links need to be made explicit both to increase conceptual clarity and to prevent undesirable normative assumptions from finding their way into such research practices, through which integration is reduced to a process of 'immigrants gaining proximity to non-immigrants' in terms of socioeconomic outcomes or in terms of cultural values. To this end, we need a theoretically consistent understanding of the normative wrongs that constitute integration problems, such that *we can differentiate it from other social phenomena and other normative goals*.

The framework of relational integration provides such a normative account of the integration problem. I have argued that relational integration problems are to be understood as a subset of relational inequality: relational integration problems pertain to a lack of

acknowledgement of others as equals, in the context of immigration, such that hierarchical membership relations emerge and are institutionalized. These hierarchical membership relations potentially constitute all kinds of moral wrongs, including domination and marginalisation, and establish a foundation for structurally unequal distributions of both material and immaterial goods.

This relational approach should help migration scholars to distinguish integration issues from other problems and phenomena that may involve immigrants gaining forms of human capital, but that do not necessarily concern integration, or at least do not provide us with enough information about the integration process to make any meaningful claims about it.

## 6.4 Dealing with civic integrationism

Throughout the dissertation, I have made references to civic integrationism as a highly problematic discourse that pervades political and societal discussions around immigration and integration, as well as research practices in the field of migration studies (often in the form of residual civic integrationism). I have argued that if we want to keep investigating integration as a way of making sense of inequalities in contexts of immigration while staying clear of (residual) civic integrationism, we need to move away from a conception of integration as an immigrant's characteristic.

With regards to this problematic discourse, this dissertation can be seen as a call for extra conceptual diligence in order to deal with the politicization of the research field. As migration scholars, we should take responsibility for the normative and political implications of our conceptualizations, categorizations, operationalizations and data construction, by explicitly outlining the normative and theoretical assumptions that inform our research, as well as its implications. Given the current discourse, it is impossible to provide 'neutral' statistics about how well immigrants are or are not doing, without feeding into the discourse of the 'deficient immigrant'. This also applies to those research endeavours that aim to contradict discourses of 'failing integration', by showing that immigrants are actually much better integrated than often assumed, because they score higher on certain indicators than previously thought. Even though these may be explicit attempts to contest certain parts of the civic integration discourse, they simultaneously reinforce the idea that integration depends (mostly) on the achievements of migrants.

My call to fellow scholars to reduce the residual civic integrationism in their work concerns both the 'input' and the 'output' phases of their research.<sup>97</sup> In terms of input, scholars need to be conscientious about the theoretical assumptions that underpin their research and

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<sup>97</sup> I thank Natalie Welfens for this sensible distinction.

steer clear of those that reinforce the central assumptions of civic integrationism. Indirectly, this is also a call for scholars not to build their conceptualizations of integration around the data-sets that are based on an understanding of integration from which non-immigrants enjoy dispensation, and are thus catered towards the measurement of 'the integration of immigrants'. In terms of research output, I want to urge scholars to be (more) precise in the conclusions that they draw from their research, or the research of others. I have argued that investigations of the participation, identification, or socioeconomic opportunities of immigrants may generate insights about certain populations, but they may not always carry the appropriate information to actually say something about *integration*. When making claims about integration, scholars need to be conscious of, and explicit about, why and how their specific research endeavour is a matter of integration.

## 6.5 The way forward: towards a relational integration research practice

Revising a concept and developing a concurrent alternative research approach is an extensive analytical endeavour, and this dissertation only provides the very first step in this direction. The main strength of the presented framework in its current form is that it provides a theoretical understanding of the *integration problem*, and should thereby help empirical integration scholars in differentiating relevant social phenomena for their research endeavours. To this end, I have i) provided a conception of the integration problem that is grounded in normative principles about the undesirability of relational inequality; and ii) outlined *legitimation processes* as an important sociological mechanism that constitutes such relational integration problems.

In chapter 5, I argued that a relational research approach does not require us to completely reinvent the wheel and come up with an entirely new research practice from scratch. Instead, I argued that there are research endeavours which could be highly informative for the purposes of relational integration analysis, even though they do not explicitly take 'integration' as (one of) their research subject(s). Studies that scrutinize how discourses, policies, social norms, or interactions constitute and reproduce social boundaries amongst people, could make inferences about the hierarchical membership relations that I have proposed as the central normative problem for integration scholars.

In terms of quantitative research, studies on public opinion, mutual identification, as well as on prejudice and attitudes towards others (e.g. D'Ancona 2014; Pettigrew & Meertens 1995) could be useful for investigating relational integration. The German SVR, for example, has been measuring norms, perceptions, and expectations about integration on a quantitative scale (Beigang & Wittlif 2018).<sup>98</sup> However, further steps would need to be taken to incorporate

<sup>98</sup> Although the SVR investigates both people with and without a migration background, they do not take on a relational approach to integration. They use these indicators to measure the 'integration climate', which

such research into a *relational ontology* to avoid individualizing these aspects of the membership relations under investigation. This is to say that they should not be portrayed as dispositions that are pre-given attributes of the pre-given individuals under investigation, that then affect the interactions of an integration process (Elias & Scotson 1994; Emirbayer 1997). Rather, they both constitute and are constituted by the relational integration process and should be conceptualized as such.

However, if we want to expand our understanding of relational integration as the dynamic, interactional social phenomenon that I have argued it to be, the framework needs to be developed further. To this end, I discuss some initial sets of questions that would need to be expanded on for a more comprehensive theory, aimed at further identifying and understanding the mechanisms that constitute integration as a relational process, as well as their effects.

In terms of theoretical development, more attention needs to be devoted to our thinking about *progress* in terms of relational integration. If we want to be able to move beyond diagnosing integration problems, we need to further develop our theoretical understanding of what such progress could look like and the different forms it could take – again, assuming that there is not *one* universal model of integrated membership relations. Theorizing progress in terms of integration requires, amongst other things, that we start thinking about various potential trade-offs in relational integration. For example, we can theorize what it means for relational integration on a societal level, if integration amongst some members prompts disintegration amongst others; or if political integration instigates socioeconomic disintegration. A slightly different type of question would be to examine the notion of intersectionality in terms of integration – could progress be attained in some of these ‘intersections’, without progress in others? And, a question that does not necessarily concern a trade-off, but is concerned with ‘ups and downs’ in terms of progress, would be to explore the theorization of the possibility of backlashes of disintegration after integrative change has been attained.

A second set of questions, that is also linked to our thinking about progress, is to advance our thinking about the *responsibility* for the realization of integrative social change. As should be clear by now, a relational approach to integration moves away from the civic integrationist idea that integration is primarily the immigrant’s responsibility. It also precludes the idea that people, immigrants and non-immigrants alike, would be ‘personally responsible for their own integration’, since there is no such thing as ‘a person’s integration’ to begin with. By engaging with relational understandings of responsibility, such as put forward by Young (2006), Walker (2007), and Tronto (2012, 2013) further theoretical inquiry should be made into how we are to analyse and attribute such relational forms of responsibility in terms of integration, as well as how to assess the relevance of different kinds of responsibility (e.g. moral responsibility vs. prospective responsibility (Collins & Lawford-Smith 2016)). Such a theory about the

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is conceptualized as the social environment that sets the scene for the integration of immigrants, rather than integration in itself.

attribution of responsibility for the attainment of integration should, first, be instrumental for understanding the conditions under which integrative social change could take place. Second, such insights should be beneficial for the advancement of an empirical research agenda in providing additional normative arguments for studying certain phenomena and actors over others, based on the allocation of responsibility.

In terms of the operationalization of relational integration, further attention would need to be devoted to merging the normative foundations of theory on relational inequality with the ontological and epistemological assumptions of relational sociology. While relational sociology has received increasing attention over the last decade (e.g. Crossley 2010; Donati 2010) – sometimes also called *process sociology* (Cederman 2005; van Krieken 2001), or *process-relational sociology* (Dépelteau 2018) – most scholarship thus far has been devoted to asserting its ontological and epistemological principles over substantialist and positivist views on social scientific research. More concrete methodological approaches still need to be developed.

This involves dealing with a set of fundamental epistemological and related methodological questions about the investigation of (in)equality relations in general, and (in) equality in membership relations in specific. For example, we need to deal with what Emirbayer (1997 p. 303) has dubbed ‘the problem of boundary specification’ of relational approaches. Recall the quote by Elias in which he uses the metaphor of a game to illustrate how a social phenomenon comprises more than just the sum of its players and its rules, but rather ‘the changing pattern created by the players as a whole . . . the totality of their dealings in their relationships with each other’ (Elias 1978 p. 130): So the question would be how we are to distil our units of study from this ‘totality of dealings in the relationships between people’ without compromising their relational character. Particularly relevant for relational integration would be the question of how to demarcate ‘membership relations’ from social relations in general, without reducing membership to an attribute – something that people can own.

## 6.6 Reclaiming integration

In the first chapter of this dissertation, I laid out arguments for a revisionary strategy towards the integration concept. Rather than throwing out the baby with the bathwater by discarding the concept altogether, I argued that we could try to reclaim the word from its problematic political use. My argument for doing so was two-fold. First, I reasoned that not using the word could be seen as a firm statement against the ways in which the concept has been abused by others, but it also limits us in investigating the structural inequalities in immigration contexts that many integration scholars are trying to make sense of. Second, I asserted that by not using the word, one risks sidelining oneself from debates on these issues, thereby reducing the resonance of one’s research both within migration studies, and in broader societal discourse.

Thus, this revisionary project on integration not only aims to enhance our understanding of integration as a social phenomenon, but also to resist the fact that the problematic predispositions of political integrationist discourse have made it into something negative and undesirable. In presenting a revised conception, the aim is to provide people the analytical tools to think about integration constructively, thereby hopefully also affecting the ways in which integration is understood as a category of practice.

This research endeavour on its own is not going to make this happen. In order for such tactics to be effective, the shift from 'integrating immigrants' to 'integrating social relations' needs to catch on and become a common framework for integration research, such that 'integration' is no longer automatically linked to 'the integration of immigrants' in people's minds. It is not just the advocates of integration research who have a role to play here, by making this shift in their research approaches. I end this conclusion with a call to the critical migration scholars who have been investigating issues that are closely related to relational integration – like the examples provided in 5.6. In their approaches towards, for example, diversity policies and governmental categories, these scholars are likely to affiliate with the critical integration scholars as introduced in 1.2.2, joining them in their critique against the (ab)uses of the word integration in both political and academic discourses. As such, they are unlikely to use the concept for their own analyses.<sup>99</sup> My hope would be that this framework of relational integration provides a motivation for reconsidering this general aversion against integration as a research subject. The more scholars would use the concept for their critical approaches, the more impact it could have on the general understanding of integration, both as a category of analysis and as a category of practice.

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<sup>99</sup> This assumption is based, partly, on the inferences of their work, and partly on the many conversations I have had during seminars and conferences with critical migration scholars, many of whom were wary of the term integration in general.





# Chapter 7



Appendices

### 3.1 Overview public documents

- Feldballe Film & TV. (2010). Et liv i Danmark. København: Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration.
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# Chapter 8



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# Chapter 9



English summary

This dissertation can be seen as a call for a more thorough theoretical understanding of 'integration' as a research subject in the field of migration studies. It concerns a plea for a revision of what we consider to be 'integration', and, more specifically, of what we consider to be an 'integration problem'. It combines a diagnosis of conceptual problems in conventional theorisations of integration in contemporary migration studies with an argument for a revision of this understanding of the concept.

Its main theoretical advancement is the introduction of the notion of *relational integration* as an alternative to conventional conceptualizations of integration. A central feature of this relational framework is that *relational integration is not concerned with 'the integration of immigrants'*. Conventionally, integration is conceptualized as a process of social change that, if successful, results in a situation in which formerly 'non-integrated immigrants' are now integrated into a society. In this approach, integration is a characteristic that can be ascribed to (categories of) individuals who can be 'integrated' to various degrees. Crucially, this characteristic *always* pertains to the 'integration of immigrants'. Non-immigrants can be helpful or obstructive vis-à-vis immigrants and thereby facilitate or impede the immigrants' integration, but they cannot integrate themselves. To put it bluntly: in the conventional view, the main research problem concerns the *existence of 'non-integrated immigrants'*, and the disadvantaged positions that their 'non-integratedness' brings along.

By introducing and developing a relational conception of integration, I explicitly distance this framework from any approach that analyses 'the integration of immigrants'. My proposed relational approach to integration takes the *relations amongst people*, which can be established through institutions and interpersonal relations, as the primary site of integration. Relational integration takes place in the institutions and interactions that constitute people's co-existence as members of a society. In this approach, it is impossible to ascribe integration as a characteristic to a person or a category of people.

## Chapter 1 – Introduction

This dissertation's central question is: *How should integration be conceptualized in the social sciences?* The introduction embeds this conceptual research project in the ongoing discussion in migration studies about the use of integration as a concept, introduces its central puzzles, and lays out its general methodology.

The chapter starts with outlining arguments for why we should be critical of the ways in which the integration concept is conventionally used in migration studies, as well as arguments for why we should not, as some have suggested, discard the concept altogether. I argue that a revised, well theorised integration concept can provide valuable information about systematic inequalities and social oppositions between 'immigrants' and 'non-immigrants'.

I take these oppositions to be salient problems in our social world, not because they are a natural given, but because they have become a social reality. Immigration contexts are prone to asymmetrical relations amongst people with and without a migration background, and to structural inequalities that emerge from these asymmetries. The integration concept could help us analyse such inequalities.

After embedding my research in the existing literature, I continue by discussing my methodological approach to this revisionary project. My proposed framework of relational integration is a framework of *non-ideal theory*, set to analyse problems as we find them in our current institutional setup of society. Rather than starting from the theoretical question of what perfect integration entails, my approach aims to conceptualise the integration *problem*. Hence, rather than theorizing what we should strive for, I focus on what we should want to move away from.

Subsequently, I introduce the three problems of conventional approaches to integration research, which I outline in more detail in chapters 2-4. First, I problematize the currently insufficient understanding of how to intrinsically involve non-immigrants in our conceptualization of the integration problem. This is due to an 'integration dispensation' for non-immigrants: only immigrants can 'be integrated' to various degrees, only immigrants can have an integration problem, and only immigrants can go through an integration process. As a consequence of this dispensation, the integration problem is reduced to a problem that primarily concerns immigrants. The central research problem for conventional approaches to integration is the '(un)integratedness' of immigrants, and is therefore, per definition, situated with the immigrant.

Second, I discuss the insufficient understanding of how to differentiate integration problems from other normative problems and concurrent social phenomena that may involve immigrants. There is a strong tendency to use the integration concept for almost any development that concerns 'immigrants', without providing sufficient theoretical explanation for this inferred relationship between the investigated indicators – such as immigrants' political participation or their national identification – and the integration concept. Why should we be interested in such indicators, and what do our collected data tell us about *integration* exactly? I argue that a proper framework of integration needs to start from explicitly theorizing its normative foundations, such that it generates a consistent approach on what type of social phenomena are relevant for integration research, and why.

The third problem in current integration research is what I have named *residual civic integrationism*. With this term, I describe the ways in which the dominant political discourse on integration, commonly referred to as civic integrationism, may seep through in the work of migration scholars – with or without this necessarily being their intention. In the civic integrationist logic, the integration of immigrants is a defence mechanism of the democratic polity against the illiberal threats that immigrants allegedly pose. The central narrative of

civic integrationism is that integration thus far has failed, and that the state needs to become more actively involved in integration processes. In order to regain control of integration, the state is urged to be more demanding and assertive, and to come up with policies to 'fix the deficient immigrant' and foster the creation of 'good, liberal, self-sufficient citizens'. Integration scholars have good reasons to stay away from the civic integrationist discourse. With its nativist underpinnings it fundamentally violates basic egalitarian principles, such as the equal moral worth of people, and has highly stigmatizing and exclusive implications. A more thorough theorization of the concept should help scholars to build research upon consistent theoretical assumptions, rather than implicitly building on residual civic integrationism.

After discussing these problems, I give a short preview of my proposed solution: a conceptual framework of *relational integration*. In short, I argue for a conception of *integration problems* as a subset of problems of relational inequality. More specifically, this conception is concerned with relational inequality in terms of *membership relations*. Integration problems arise when full membership, in both its formal and informal aspects is not automatically extended to newcomers, neither immediately, nor over time, such that those categorized as 'immigrants' do not enjoy social standing as equal members, and are perceived and treated as inferior, second-class members. This, I argue, is the core of the relational integration problem.

I finish the introduction with some reflection on terminology, a sensitive issue in migration studies. I outline my strategy for dealing with the politicization of the word (im)migrant. Where possible, I make a distinction between a category of analysis: 'immigrants' as a theoretical, descriptive notion for anyone who has migrated – in particular to a different country – within their lifetime (thereby not making any distinctions based on countries of origin), and as category of practice: people categorized as (im)migrants or 'migrantized' people, to refer to the empirical tendency in which the 'immigrant' label has acquired meaning beyond this descriptive term.

## Chapter 2 – “Two-way integration”

This chapter sets the scene for the first conceptual problem as mentioned above: how to include the receiving society in our conceptualization of integration. It scrutinizes the oft-made claim in integration research (and policy-making) that integration is a 'two-way process'. I argue that this notion of the two-way process, in its current use, does not provide a satisfying answer to the question of *how to conceptualize integration problems, such that non-immigrants are an intrinsic part of them*.

I start the chapter by outlining why conceptualising integration as a one-way process is both undesirable and infeasible. I then continue to show that the notion of a two-way process does not currently provide us sufficient theoretical foundation to solve these problems of 'one-

wayness'. Based on an extensive literature review, I make a distinction between three general understandings of integration as a two-way process: i) the receiving society is *affected* by the integration of immigrants; ii) the receiving society can *influence* the integration of immigrants; and iii) non-immigrants and immigrants *integrate* with each other. Most researchers start from the first or second understanding which, I argue, fail to avoid the pitfalls of one-wayness. They do not offer a theoretically consistent outlook on the role of the receiving society and non-immigrants in what they take to be 'integration problems', nor in the 'integration process' that is supposed to fix these problems

The most important issue in this analysis, is that most two-way approaches conceptually maintain the 'integration dispensation' for non-immigrants: only immigrants can 'be integrated' to various degrees, only immigrants can have an integration problem, and only immigrants can go through an integration process. Non-immigrants are taken to be contextual, external factors, who can influence the integration of others, but are not intrinsically part of the integration problem and the integration process. They can cause integration problems for others, but are never attributed integration problems. Thereby, such approaches uphold an understanding of integration as a process for 'immigrants' only: their central research problem is the '(un)integratedness' of immigrants.

The analysis as presented in this chapter both reinforces my call for a reconceptualization of integration in which the role of the receiving society is consistently theorized, as well as providing a first direction towards such a reconceptualization. The notion of a two-way process as a process in which people *integrate with each other* (like in the approach nr. iii) points in the direction of a relational understanding of integration, in which we depart from an understanding in which some people need to integrate into a society. The idea of people 'integrating with each other' implies an understanding of integration in which everyone in a society is intrinsically involved. This way, the integration problem is a problem that is situated amongst all people in a society rather than a problem that is first and foremost situated in the immigrant.

### **Chapter 3 – 'The Participation Paradox'**

This chapter involves an empirical study on the Danish political discourse around immigrant political participation and integration. It addresses a 'participation paradox', which emerges from the ambivalent attitude in European integration discourses towards the political participation of immigrants. In this discourse, immigrant participation is both demanded and feared. On the one hand it is demanded that immigrants perform as 'active citizens': citizens who are willing to put in effort, who are engaged with issues of the public good, and who respect the institutions and values of the receiving society. On the other hand, claims are made implying that society

*as it is*, with its proclaimed progressive liberal democratic values, needs to be defended against immigrants' participation: the political participation by immigrants may inflict undesirable forms of political change. This paradox has restrictive effects on the democratic position of immigrants. As is shown in this chapter, it generates debates around the discouragement of participation and the restriction of immigrant participation by tying it to specific conditions of what makes for 'good participation'.

This chapter shows that we cannot understand political integration without profoundly investigating the power relations that constitute the conditions under which immigrants get to participate in the first place. In the interplay between the demand for and fear of participation, a specific image of the 'civic active immigrant' is constructed. Within this specific understanding of 'civicness', these individuals are not allowed to participate in the democratic polity as full democratic subjects who are free to voice their interests and perspectives. Instead, their participation serves as a *tool* for them to become 'civic', which means to be active and engaged, reinforcing the alleged status quo of liberal progressiveness. This affects the democratic position of immigrants in the polity, who do not enjoy the social standing as equal participants and whose participation is conditioned to criteria, set by the receiving society.

This case study illustrates how more immigrant participation does not necessarily equal more integration: as long as immigrants' participation is seen as a potential threat, democracy may be used as a mechanism of exclusion. Through this analysis, this chapter provides an illustration of how many conventional conceptions of (political) integration are missing the point of what constitutes a 'political integration problem', by only focussing on the 'integration of immigrants' and their participation. Such a limited focus impoverishes the conceptual work that integration can do for us because we miss out on some serious infringements of (political) equality and practices of social closure in contexts of immigration.

## **Chapter 4 – Theorizing the relationship between participation and integration**

This chapter hones in further on the investigation of political participation and integration, this time from a more conceptual angle. It takes on the question of why we should be interested in immigrant political participation for the investigation of political integration in the first place. What is it about political participation, such as public deliberation, signing petitions, voting, answering opinion polls, protesting, and other public expression of perspectives, that would make it an *integration* issue? In doing so, it attends to the second analytical puzzle that I laid out above, which is concerned with disentangling integration from other phenomena that may happen to concern immigrants.

The chapter starts from the observation that a large body of studies tend to take the 'immigrant participation rate' as a *proxy variable* for political integration. The shared intuition

seems to be that more participation by immigrants inherently indicates more integration, and that this assumption does not need any further explication. I question this standard view of immigrant participation as a proxy for political integration. As the previous chapter has shown, we can problematize this inferred relationship from an empirical perspective by pointing to situations in which increased immigrant participation leads to resistance or a backlash from non-immigrants. In this chapter, I add a theoretical critique by scrutinizing the theoretical assumptions behind this inferred relationship, which are mostly left unexplained in conventional integration research.

I provide a new, six-fold taxonomy of the virtuous qualities that could be ascribed to political participation in general, and to the political participation of immigrants specifically: education, identification, epistemic democratization, emancipation, legitimation, and interest satisfaction. This taxonomy should enhance our understanding of different potential approaches towards the virtue of participation in general, and the relationship between participation and political integration in particular. Based on it, I analyze (i) why political participation could be important; (ii) why the political participation of immigrants could be important; (iii) what attributing this quality to the participation of migrants implies about a conception of integration, and (iv) what we would know about this interpretation of integration if we were to use the political participation of migrants as a proxy for its measurement. It also provides the theoretical ground for renouncing the research practice of using immigrant political participation in and of its own as a proxy for the measurement of political integration. I show that, depending on one's theoretical approach towards the relationship between the two, 'immigrant participation' as a proxy either generates undesirable conceptions of what political integration entails, provides too little information about its attainment, or both.

Crucially, the chapter shows that the institutionalization of political equality, such that participants enjoy the social standing for their participation to be valuable, is a necessary condition for the attainment of integration through participation. As such, scholars should move away from using the variable as a proxy for integration: without empirical information about the context in terms of political equality, participation numbers do not provide sufficient information to draw conclusions about integration.

## Chapter 5 – Introducing Relational Integration

This chapter introduces the notion of relational integration as an alternative for the conventional perspectives on integration that were scrutinized in the previous chapters. The framework builds on a conception of *integration problems* as a subset of problems of relational inequality (hence my terminology of *relational integration*). Relational egalitarians argue that, when investigating structural inequalities, we should primarily be concerned with the inegalitarian relations that

constitute superior and inferior positions in society and that generate and justify inequalities in the distribution of freedoms, resources, and welfare. So rather than taking the unequal distribution between people in itself as a focus point, relational egalitarians investigate the relations in which such distributions are arranged. These relations can range from egalitarian to inegalitarian (hierarchical) and affect people's position in society both in terms of welfare as well as social standing or status.

More specific to contexts of immigration, I point to hierarchical membership relations as the central issue for problems of relational integration. Immigration is prone to trigger questions of membership, since it inherently changes the composition of membership relations as they were. Empirically, we often see that immigrants and their offspring are not acknowledged as equals in terms of membership, and, accordingly, are not extended the formal and informal rights and benefits that membership entails. These inequalities, I argue constitute the normative wrong that makes integration a relevant subject for migration scholars. This, I argue, is the core of the relational integration problem.

I then argue that social legitimation process, i.e. the processes in which people ascribe fellow residents various degrees of *legitimacy as a member*, provide important mechanisms for the empirical investigation of these hierarchical membership relations. The 'legitimacy of membership' refers to the extent to which people are perceived and treated as 'rightful' members of a society, such that their membership is deemed appropriate, desirable, and 'as it should be'. These legitimacy processes constitute a relational integration problem through the idea that membership of a society is not a given (one either is a member or is not), but is gradual and conditional. This then constitutes a hierarchy in membership relations through which some people are seen as superior members, and some as inferior.

For relational integration to be attained, all members should enjoy social standing as equals, not because they have somehow deserved it, but because they *are there*. Normatively, the attainment of relational integration as an end state involves moving away from thinking about membership in terms of legitimacy – away from membership as a status that should be bound to certain conditions such that we can rightfully make a distinction between 'real members' and 'questionable members'. Relational integration is attained when membership relations are characterised by *the absence of the status hierarchies and corresponding social boundaries of membership* in which members, often those who are categorized as 'immigrants', are degraded to second-class members.

I finish the chapter with two theoretical considerations about integration that I derive from the conception of integration as a problem of relational inequality. The first being that relational integration potentially requires significant forms of social change that go beyond temporal adaptation problems that 'naturally arise' with the arrival of newcomers to a country. Instead, I argue, relational integration processes are processes of *social transformation*. Empirically, the overcoming of the underlying assumptions of what makes a legitimate member

is likely to involve deeply intersectional process of change, in which nativist assumptions of legitimate membership are intertwined with racist, classist, and sexist notions of membership.

Second, the framework of relational integration does not take such dynamics as *contextual* to the integration problem and process. It does not take discrimination based on descent, race, or class as a problem *for the integration of immigrants*. Instead, it conceptualizes them as integration problems in and of themselves. Hence, it shifts the site of the integration problem and process from a problem sited in the immigrant, and a process that immigrants go through, to a problem sited in the relations amongst people within a society, and a process of relational change. Rather than taking 'integration' as a characteristic of a certain person who would be 'more' or 'less' integrated, relational integration asks whether membership relations, and the social phenomena in which they are expressed, are integrated. This means an explicit departure from conventional integration research: from analysing the integration of certain people (immigrants), we move towards analysing the integration of social relations amongst people.

## Chapter 6 – Conclusion

Revising a concept and developing a concurrent alternative research approach is an extensive analytical endeavour, and this dissertation only provides the very first step in this direction. The main strength of the presented framework in its current form is that it provides a theoretical understanding of the *integration problem*, and should thereby help empirical integration scholars in differentiating relevant social phenomena for their research endeavours. To this end, I have i) provided a conception of the integration problem that is grounded in normative principles about the undesirability of relational inequality; and ii) outlined *legitimation processes* as an important sociological mechanism that constitutes such relational integration problems.

In the conclusion, I reflect back on the two conceptual problems that are diagnosed throughout the dissertation, and ask how the notion of relational integration would provide a solution to these problems. I also return to the issue of civic integrationism, and discuss how migration scholars are to deal with it in their work.

The first problem concerns the integration dispensation for non-immigrants, which obscures our understanding of non-immigrants as an intrinsic part of the integration problem and process. A relational approach actively discards this dispensation by pertaining to the integration of membership relations, rather than the 'integration of immigrants' (or the 'integration of non-immigrants', for that matter). These membership relations automatically involve non-immigrants as they are an intrinsic part of the constellation of membership relations in which integration takes place.

Investigating the integration of membership relations, rather than the integration

of immigrants, thus changes the subject of integration research. In doing so, it should enable scholars to move away from the problems of one-wayness, as discussed in chapter 2. It does not portray society as a harmonious whole – on the contrary, it conceptualizes society as the product and site of the hierarchical membership relations under scrutiny. As such, relational integration situates integration problems at the very core of a society. Accordingly, it also does not conceptualize integration as a process in which immigrants need to gain proximity to some example that is set by this society. Relational integration processes involve resolving hierarchical membership relations within society, rather than immigrants living up to certain conditions in order to become part of a society. Last, because it focuses on the integration of relations amongst residents, relational integration does not reiterate a division between ‘people who need to integrate’, and ‘people for whom integration will never be an issue’ because relational integration is not something that can be ascribed to individuals in the first place. It thereby reduces the risk that migration scholars strengthen the stigma of the ‘unintegrated migrant’ that has gained such momentum in current civic integrationist discourse.

The second conceptual problem running through this dissertation's analyses is that many approaches to integration take the involvement of immigrants as a sufficient condition for a phenomenon to be an issue of integration, without providing sufficient theoretical explanation for this inferred relationship. In doing so, I have argued, it remains unclear what integration is a problem of, why we should be investigating it, and what specific phenomena we should be interested in when doing so. The framework of relational integration therefore provides an explicit normative account of the integration problem. I have argued that relational integration problems are to be understood as a subset of relational inequality: relational integration problems pertain to a lack of acknowledgement of others as equals, in the context of immigration, such that hierarchical membership relations emerge and are institutionalized. These hierarchical membership relations potentially constitute all kinds of moral wrongs, including domination and marginalisation, and establish a foundation for structurally unequal distributions of both material and immaterial goods. This relational approach should help migration scholars to distinguish integration issues from other problems and phenomena that may involve immigrants gaining forms of human capital, but that do not necessarily concern integration, or at least do not provide us with enough information about the integration process to make any meaningful claims about it.

In terms of the discussed issues around civic integrationism, I call to fellow migration scholars for extra conceptual diligence in order to deal with the politicization of the research field. As migration scholars, we should take responsibility for the normative and political implications of our conceptualizations, categorizations, operationalizations and data construction, by explicitly outlining the normative and theoretical assumptions that inform our research, as well as its implications.

If we want to expand our understanding of relational integration as the dynamic,

interactional social phenomenon that I have argued it to be, the framework needs to be developed further. To this end, I finish the conclusion by discussing some initial sets of questions pertaining to the operationalization of relational integration; the responsibility for relational integration; and our understanding of progress in terms of integration. These would need to be expanded on for a more comprehensive theory, aimed at further identifying and understanding the mechanisms that constitute integration as a relational process.



# Chapter 10



Dutch summary

In dit proefschrift neem ik de onder de loep hoe migratiewetenschappers het begrip 'integratie' gebruiken in hun onderzoek. Ik combineer daarbij een diagnose van conceptuele problemen in bestaand integratieonderzoek met een betoog voor een herziening van wat wij als 'integratie' beschouwen, en, met name, van wat wij aanmerken als 'integratieprobleem'.

Mijn belangrijkste theoretische bijdrage aan de bestaande discussie rondom integratie, is de introductie van het idee van 'relationele integratie' als alternatief voor bestaande integratieconcepties. Een belangrijk kenmerk van deze relationele integratietheorie is dat integratie niet in eerste instantie gaat over 'de integratie van immigranten'. In conventioneel integratieonderzoek wordt integratie geconceptualiseerd als een proces van sociale verandering dat, indien succesvol, resulteert in een situatie waarin voorheen 'niet-geïntegreerde immigranten' nu geïntegreerd zijn in een samenleving. Integratie is dan een kenmerk dat kan worden toegeschreven aan (categorieën van) individuen die in verschillende maten 'geïntegreerd' zijn. Cruciaal hierbij is dat dit kenmerk *altijd* betrekking heeft op de immigrant. Niet-immigranten kunnen behulpzaam of belemmerend zijn en daarmee de integratie van immigranten vergemakkelijken of bemoeilijken, maar zij kunnen zelf niet integreren. Kort door de bocht: in deze conventionele opvatting betreft het belangrijkste integratieprobleem het bestaan van 'niet-geïntegreerde immigranten', en de achtergestelde posities die hun 'niet-geïntegreerd zijn' met zich meebrengt.

Met het introduceren en ontwikkelen van een relationele opvatting van integratie neem ik expliciet afstand van elke benadering die 'de integratie van immigranten' analyseert. Mijn voorgestelde relationele benadering van integratie neemt de relaties tussen mensen, die tot stand kunnen worden gebracht via instituties en interpersoonlijke relaties, als de belangrijkste drager van integratie. Relationele integratie vindt plaats in de instituties en interacties die vormgeven aan hoe mensen in een samenleving met elkaar omgaan. In deze benadering is het onmogelijk om integratie als kenmerk toe te schrijven aan een persoon of een categorie mensen. Relationele integratie heeft betrekking op de relaties tussen mensen.

## Hoofdstuk 1: Inleiding

De centrale vraag van dit proefschrift is: hoe moet integratie worden geconceptualiseerd in de sociale wetenschappen? De inleiding plaatst dit conceptuele onderzoeksproject in de context van een lopende discussie in migratiestudies over het gebruik en misbruik van 'integratie' als concept. Daarnaast introduceer ik de belangrijkste conceptuele puzzels en mijn methodologie. Het hoofdstuk begint met een uiteenzetting van argumenten waarom we kritisch zouden moeten zijn op hoe het integratieconcept wordt gebruikt in migratiestudies. Daarna presenteer ik argumenten waarom we niet, zoals sommige wetenschappers hebben gesuggereerd, het concept helemaal overboord moeten gooien. Ik betoog dat een herzien, goed getheoretiseerd in-

tegratieconcept waardevolle informatie kan opleveren over systematische ongelijkheden en sociale tegenstellingen tussen ‘immigranten’ en ‘niet-immigranten’. Migratiecontexten zijn bijzonder vatbaar voor asymmetrische relaties tussen mensen met en zonder migratieachtergrond, en voor structurele ongelijkheden die voortvloeien uit deze asymmetrieën. Het integratieconcept zou ons kunnen helpen om dergelijke ongelijkheden te analyseren.

Na deze inbedding van mijn onderzoek in de bestaande literatuur bespreek ik mijn methodologische benadering. Mijn theoretisch raamwerk van relationele integratie volgt een benadering van *non-ideal theory*: het doel is om problemen te analyseren zoals we ze aantreffen in de institutionele structuur van onze bestaande samenlevingen. Ik begin daarbij niet met de vraag naar wat een ideaalbeeld van integratie precies inhoudt, maar vanuit de vraag hoe we bestaande *integratieproblemen* moeten begrijpen. In plaats van te theoretiseren waar we naar zouden moeten streven, concentreer ik me op de vraag wat in eerste instantie eigenlijk het probleem is.

Vervolgens introduceer ik de drie tekortkomingen van conventionele benaderingen van integratieonderzoek, die ik in hoofdstuk 2-4 uitvoeriger uiteenzet. Eerst problematiseer ik het gebrek aan inzicht in hoe we niet-immigranten intrinsiek betrekken bij onze conceptualisering van het integratieprobleem. Dit probleem wordt veroorzaakt door een ‘integratie-dispensatie’ voor niet-immigranten: alleen immigranten kunnen een integratieprobleem hebben, alleen immigranten kunnen een integratieproces doorlopen, en alleen immigranten kunnen in verschillende mate ‘geïntegreerd’ worden of zijn. Als gevolg van deze dispensatie wordt het integratieprobleem gereduceerd tot een probleem dat vooral immigranten aangaat. Het centrale onderzoeksprobleem voor conventionele benaderingen van integratie is de ‘(on)geïntegreerdheid’ van immigranten en ligt daarom per definitie bij de immigrant.

Ten tweede is er onvoldoende inzicht in hoe integratieproblemen kunnen worden onderscheiden van andere sociale verschijnselen waarbij immigranten betrokken kunnen zijn. Er is een sterke tendens om het integratieconcept te gebruiken voor bijna elke verschijnsel dat ‘immigranten’ betreft, zonder hiervoor voldoende theoretische basis te geven. Waarom zouden we geïnteresseerd zijn in bepaalde indicatoren – zoals de politieke participatie van immigranten of hun nationale identificatie – en wat vertellen onze verzamelde gegevens ons precies over integratie? Ik betoog dat een goed integratiekader moet beginnen met het expliciet theoretiseren van de normatieve grondslagen ervan voor een consistente benadering van welke sociale verschijnselen relevant zijn voor integratieonderzoek, en waarom.

Het derde probleem in het huidige integratieonderzoek is wat ik *residual civic integrationism* heb genoemd, wat vertaald kan worden als ‘residueel burgerschapsintegrationisme’. Met deze term verwijs ik naar de manieren waarop het dominante politieke discours over integratie, in de literatuur aangeduid als *civic integrationism*, kan doorsijpelen in het werk van migratiewetenschappers – zonder dat dit noodzakelijkerwijs hun opzet is. In de logica van burgerschapsintegrationisme functioneert de integratie van immigranten als

verdedigingsmechanisme tegen de onliberale dreigingen die immigranten zouden vormen voor het democratisch bestel. Het centrale narratief is dat integratie tot dusverre mislukt is en dat de staat actiever betrokken moet worden bij integratieprocessen. Om de controle over integratie terug te krijgen, wordt de staat aangespoord om assertiever en veeleisender te zijn ten opzichte van de immigrant, en om met beleid te komen om de zogenaamde gebreken van immigranten te herstellen, en zo de creatie van 'goede, liberale, zelfvoorzienende burgers' te bevorderen.

Integratiewetenschappers hebben goede redenen om weg te blijven van dit integratiediscours: het is doorspekt met nativistische aannames, en schendt fundamentele egalitaire principes zoals de gelijke morele waarde van mensen. Verschillende wetenschappers hebben laten zien dat het zeer stigmatiserende en uitsluitende implicaties heeft. Een hertheoretisering van het integratieconcept zou wetenschappers moeten helpen om onderzoek te baseren op consistente theoretische aannames, in plaats van impliciet voort te bouwen op residueel burgerschapsintegrationisme.

Na het bespreken van deze problemen, geef ik een korte preview van mijn voorgestelde conceptuele oplossing: een theoretisch raamwerk van relationele integratie. Ik pleit voor een conceptualisering van integratieproblemen als een subset van problemen van *relationele ongelijkheid*. Dit raamwerk focust specifiek op relationele ongelijkheid in termen van *lidmaatschapsrelaties*. Integratieproblematiek doet zich voor wanneer volledig lidmaatschap, zowel in formeel als informeel opzicht, niet automatisch wordt uitgebreid tot nieuwkomers, noch onmiddellijk, noch in de loop van de tijd. Als gevolg hiervan genieten diegenen die als 'immigrant' worden gecategoriseerd niet de sociale status als 'gelijkwaardig lid van de samenleving'. Zij worden gezien en behandeld als inferieure, tweederangs leden. Hier ligt de kern van het relationele integratieprobleem.

Ik sluit de inleiding af met een reflectie op mijn eigen terminologie, een gevoelig onderwerp in migratiestudies. Hierbij zoom ik onder andere in op mijn strategie voor het omgaan met de politisering van het woord (im)migrant. Waar mogelijk maak ik onderscheid tussen de *analysecategorie* 'immigranten': als theoretisch, descriptief begrip voor iedereen die tijdens zijn leven is gemigreerd - in het bijzonder naar een ander land - (daarbij geen onderscheid makend op basis van herkomstlanden) , en als *praktijkcategorie*: mensen die worden gecategoriseerd als (im) migranten of 'gemigrantiseerde mensen', om te verwijzen naar de empirische tendens waarin het label 'immigrant' een politieke betekenis heeft gekregen waarin sommige mensen meer 'migrant' zijn dan anderen.

## Hoofdstuk 2: 'Tweerichtingsintegratie'

Dit hoofdstuk gaat verder in op het eerste conceptuele probleem dat is besproken in de inleiding: hoe moeten we de niet-immigrant opnemen in onze conceptualisering van integratie? Ik zoom in op een vaak gehoorde bewering in integratieonderzoek en -beleidsvorming: dat integratie een 'tweerichtingsproces' is. Ik laat ik zien waarom dit idee van tweerichtingsintegratie geen bevredigende oplossing biedt voor het intrinsiek betrekken van niet-immigranten bij onze conceptualisering van een integratieprobleem, althans niet op de manier waarop het nu gebruikt wordt.

Ik begin het hoofdstuk met een uiteenzetting van argumenten over waarom de notie van integratie als 'éénrichtingsverkeer' zowel onwenselijk als onrealistisch is. Vervolgens toon ik aan dat de notie van een tweerichtingsproces, zoals nu gebruikt wordt, onvoldoende theoretische basis biedt om deze problemen op te lossen. Op basis van een uitgebreide literatuurstudie maak ik een onderscheid tussen drie algemene opvattingen over integratie als tweerichtingsproces: i) de ontvangende samenleving wordt beïnvloed door de integratie van immigranten; ii) de ontvangende samenleving kan de integratie van immigranten beïnvloeden; en iii) niet-immigranten en immigranten integreren met elkaar. De meeste onderzoekers gaan uit van de eerste of tweede opvatting die, zo beargumenteer ik, de valkuilen van éénrichtingsverkeer niet kunnen vermijden.

Het belangrijkste probleem hierbij is dat zij op conceptueel niveau de 'integratiedispensatie' voor niet-immigranten handhaven: alleen immigranten kunnen in verschillende mate 'geïntegreerd zijn', alleen immigranten kunnen een integratieprobleem hebben en alleen immigranten kunnen een integratieproces doorlopen. Niet-immigranten worden gezien als contextuele, externe factoren die de integratie van anderen kunnen beïnvloeden, maar die niet intrinsiek deel uitmaken van het integratieprobleem en -proces. Ze kunnen integratieproblemen veroorzaken voor anderen, maar kunnen zelf geen integratieprobleem hebben. Daardoor handhaven dergelijke benaderingen het begrip van integratie als een proces voor alleen 'immigranten': hun centrale onderzoeksprobleem is de '(on)geïntegreerdheid' van immigranten.

De analyse in dit hoofdstuk onderbouwt mijn oproep voor een herconceptualisering van integratie waarbij de rol van de ontvangende samenleving consistent wordt getheoretiseerd als intrinsiek onderdeel van het probleem, én biedt een eerste handvat voor zo'n conceptualisering. De notie van een tweerichtingsproces als een proces waarin mensen *met elkaar integreren* (benadering iii), wijst in de richting van een relationeel begrip van integratie waarbij we afstand nemen van het idee dat *sommige mensen* moeten integreren in de richting van een samenleving. Het idee dat mensen 'met elkaar integreren' impliceert een begrip van integratie waarbij iedereen in een samenleving intrinsiek betrokken is, zodat het integratieprobleem een probleem is dat zich tussen deze mensen in een samenleving afspeelt in plaats van dat het in de

eerste plaats gesitueerd is in de immigrant die in eerste instantie nog buiten deze samenleving staat.

### **Hoofdstuk 3 – De Participatieparadox**

In dit hoofdstuk presenteer ik samen met collega Marjukka Weide een empirische studie naar het Deense politieke discours rond politieke participatie en integratie van immigranten. Wij analyseren daarbij het bestaan van wat wij een 'participatieparadox' genoemd hebben. Deze paradox komt voort uit de ambivalente houding in het Europese integratiediscours ten aanzien van de politieke participatie van immigranten. In dit discours wordt participatie van immigranten zowel geëist als gevreesd. Enerzijds wordt geëist dat immigranten zich gedragen als 'actieve burgers': burgers die bereid zijn zich in te spannen, die zich bezighouden met kwesties van algemeen belang en die de instellingen en waarden van de ontvangende samenleving respecteren. Aan de andere kant wordt geïmpliceerd dat de samenleving zoals ze is, en met name haar zogenaamd 'progressieve liberale democratische waarden', moeten worden verdedigd tegen de participatie van immigranten: de politieke participatie van immigranten kan ongewenste vormen van politieke verandering teweegbrengen. Deze paradox heeft beperkende effecten op de democratische positie van immigranten. Zoals in dit hoofdstuk wordt aangetoond, leidt het tot debatten over het inperken van participatie van immigranten en tot het stellen van specifieke voorwaarden voor wat 'goede participatie' is, die niet gelijk gelden voor mensen met en zonder immigratieachtergrond.

In het samenspel tussen de vraag naar, en de angst voor participatie ontstaat een ideaalbeeld van de 'goede en civiele' immigrant als actieve burger. Binnen deze specifieke opvatting van 'burgerschap' zijn immigranten niet zomaar vrij om deel te nemen aan democratisch processen als volwaardige participanten, en hierbij hun belangen en perspectieven te uiten op voet van democratische gelijkheid. In plaats daarvan dient hun deelname als een instrument voor hen om 'een goede burger' te worden, wat betekent dat ze actief en betrokken móeten zijn en daarbij de vermeende status quo van liberale progressiviteit moeten erkennen en onderschrijven. Dit heeft gevolgen voor de democratische positie van immigranten: zij hebben niet de sociale status als gelijkwaardige democratische participant zolang de ontvangende samenleving specifieke voorwaarden stelt aan hun participatie.

Dit hoofdstuk laat zien dat we politieke integratie niet kunnen begrijpen zonder diepgaand onderzoek te doen naar de machtsverhoudingen waarbinnen immigranten überhaupt politiek kunnen participeren. Conventionele onderzoeksbenaderingen gaan er vaak vanuit dat de participatie van immigranten een indicator is van politieke insluiting. Deze casestudy laat echter zien dat de participatie van immigranten juist ook uitsluiting teweeg kan brengen, als deze wordt gezien als potentiële bedreiging voor de samenleving. Meer participatie

staat dus niet zomaar gelijk aan meer integratie. Zonder aandacht voor de erkenning van migranten als gelijken, kunnen we geen uitspraken doen over de staat van politieke integratie in een samenleving.

## Hoofdstuk 4 – De theoretische relatie tussen politieke participatie en integratie

In dit hoofdstuk zoom ik verder in op de verhoudingen tussen politieke participatie en integratie, dit keer vanuit een meer conceptuele hoek. Ik begin hierbij vanuit de vraag waarom we überhaupt geïnteresseerd zouden moeten zijn in de politieke participatie van immigranten, vanuit het oogpunt van integratie. Wat maakt dat politieke participatie, zoals stemmen, het ondertekenen van petitie's, publieke deliberatie, demonstreren, en andere vormen van het publiekelijk uiten van politieke standpunten, belangrijk zou zijn voor *integratie*?

Het beginpunt van dit hoofdstuk is de observatie dat een groot aantal studies de 'participatiegraad van immigranten' als een proxyvariabele voor politieke integratie beschouwt. De gedeelde intuïtie lijkt hierbij te zijn dat meer participatie van immigranten duidt op meer integratie, en dat deze aanname geen nadere toelichting behoeft. In hoofdstuk 3 is al betoogd dat we deze aanname empirisch kunnen problematiseren door te wijzen op situaties waarin verhoogde participatie van immigranten leidt tot weerstand van niet-immigranten. In dit hoofdstuk voeg ik een theoretische kritiek toe door de theoretische aannames achter deze afgeleide relatie te onderzoeken.

Ik presenteer een nieuwe, zesvoudige taxonomie van de deugdzaamste kwaliteiten die kunnen worden toegeschreven aan politieke participatie in het algemeen, en aan politieke participatie van immigranten in het bijzonder: educatie, identificatie, epistemische democratisering, emancipatie, legitimering en belangenbehartiging. Aan de hand van deze participatiedeugden analyseer ik (i) waarom politieke participatie belangrijk zou kunnen zijn; (ii) waarom de politieke participatie van immigranten belangrijk zou kunnen zijn; (iii) wat het toeschrijven van deze kwaliteit aan de participatie van migranten impliceert over wat integratie zou inhouden, en (iv) wat we zouden weten over deze interpretatie van integratie als we de politieke participatie van migranten als proxy voor integratie zouden gebruiken.

Deze taxonomie moet ons begrip van over mogelijke deugden van participatie in het algemeen, en de relatie tussen participatie en politieke integratie in het bijzonder, vergroten. Het biedt ook een theoretische basis om af te zien van de onderzoekspraktijk waarbij politieke participatie van immigranten op zichzelf wordt gebruikt als een maatstaf voor het meten van politieke integratie. Ik laat zien dat een dergelijke benadering, afhankelijk van iemands theoretische benadering van de relatie tussen de twee, ofwel onwenselijke opvattingen genereert over wat politieke integratie inhoudt; te weinig informatie geeft over de verworvenheid ervan;

of beide.

Cruciaal is dat het hoofdstuk laat zien dat de institutionalisering van politieke gelijkheid, zo dat deelnemers de sociale status genieten om hun participatie betekenisvol te laten zijn, een noodzakelijke voorwaarde is voor het bereiken van integratie door participatie. Als zodanig moeten wetenschappers afzien van het gebruik van de variabele als een proxy voor integratie: zonder empirische informatie over de context in termen van politieke gelijkheid, bieden participatieaantallen onvoldoende informatie om conclusies te trekken over integratie.

## Hoofdstuk 5 - Introductie van relationele integratie

In dit hoofdstuk introduceer ik het idee van relationele integratie als alternatief voor de benaderingen die zijn besproken in de voorgaande hoofdstukken. Mijn theorie begint vanuit een conceptie van 'integratieproblemen' als een vorm van *relationele ongelijkheid*. Relationele egalitaristen stellen dat we ons bij het onderzoeken van structurele ongelijkheden in eerste plaats moeten richten op de relaties waarbinnen superieure en inferieure posities in de samenleving ontstaan. Binnen deze ongelijke relaties ontstaan vervolgens ongelijkheden in de verdeling van vrijheden, middelen, en welvaart. Tegelijkertijd vormen zich rondom deze hiërarchische relaties ook narratieven waarin de ongelijkheden worden gerechtvaardigd. Onderzoek naar ongelijkheid moet zich daarom niet in eerste instantie richten op ongelijke verdelingen tussen mensen, maar op de hiërarchische relaties waarin deze verdelingen tot stand komen.

Toegepast op immigratiecontexten, wijs ik in dit hoofdstuk op *hiërarchische lidmaatschapsrelaties*, d.w.z. de relaties tussen de verschillende leden van een samenleving en tussen de leden en instituties van een samenleving, als de centrale kwestie voor een relationeel integratieprobleem. De komst van nieuwe inwoners veroorzaakt inherent veranderingen in bestaande lidmaatschapsrelaties. Empirisch zien we hierbij dat immigranten en hun nakomelingen vaak niet zomaar erkend worden als gelijken in termen van hun lidmaatschap. Hiermee hebben zij minder toegang tot de formele in informele rechten en voordelen die lidmaatschap met zich meebrengt. Ik betoog dat deze vorm van ongelijkheid het primaire normatieve probleem is dat integratie een relevant onderwerp maakt voor migratiewetenschappers.

Vervolgens stel ik dat *sociale legitimeringsprocessen*, dat wil zeggen de processen waarin mensen hun medebewoners verschillende gradaties van legitimiteit als lid toeschrijven, belangrijke mechanismen zijn voor het onderzoek naar deze hiërarchische lidmaatschapsrelaties. De "legitimiteit van lidmaatschap" verwijst naar de mate waarin mensen worden gezien en behandeld als "rechtmatige" leden van een samenleving, zodat hun lidmaatschap passend, wenselijk en "zoals het zou moeten zijn" wordt geacht. Deze legitimiteitsprocessen vormen een relationeel integratieprobleem: als het lidmaatschap van een samenleving geen gegeven

is maar onder bepaalde voorwaarden, in meerdere of mindere mate, aan iemand kan worden toegeschreven, ontstaat een probleem van relationele ongelijkheid waarbij onderscheid gemaakt wordt tussen de 'echte leden' van een samenleving, en leden met een inferieure lidmaatschapsstatus.

Om relationele integratie te verwezenlijken, moeten alle leden een sociale status genieten als gelijken, niet omdat ze het op de een of andere manier hebben verdiend, maar omdat ze *er zijn*. Voor het verwezenlijken van relationele integratie moet men daarom afstand nemen van het denken over lidmaatschap in termen van legitimiteit - weg van lidmaatschap als een status die aan bepaalde voorwaarden gebonden zou moeten zijn, zodat het onderscheid tussen 'echte leden' en 'twijfelachtige leden' vervalt. Relationele integratie is bereikt waar lidmaatschapsrelaties worden gekenmerkt door de afwezigheid van de statushiërarchieën in de toeschrijving van lidmaatschap waarin sommigen, vaak degenen die worden gecategoriseerd als "immigranten", worden gedegradeerd tot tweederangs leden.

Ik sluit het hoofdstuk af met twee aanvullende theoretische overwegingen over relationele integratie. De eerste is dat relationele integratie mogelijk zeer significante vormen van sociale verandering vereist die verder gaan dan het oplossen van tijdelijke aanpassingsproblemen die nu eenmaal ontstaan met de komst van nieuwkomers in een land. De hiërarchieën in lidmaatschap van een samenleving zijn vaak een intersectioneel probleem, en hangen samen met kwesties als racisme, seksisme, en klassisme. Voor het bereiken van relationele integratie moeten dergelijke problemen, die diep geworteld kunnen zijn in een samenleving, worden opgelost. Ik stel daarom voor om over relationele integratie te denken als een proces van brede sociale transformatie.

Ten tweede is het belangrijk dat het oplossen van vormen van discriminatie niet wordt beschouwd als een contextuele factor die effect kan hebben op *de integratie van immigranten*. Discriminatie *is in zichzelf* een vorm van disintegratie. Daarmee verschuift de 'locatie' van het integratieprobleem en -proces. Van het probleem van de 'ongeïntegreerde immigrant' en een proces dat immigranten doormaken, verschuiven we naar een probleem in de relaties tussen mensen en een proces van relationele verandering. In plaats van integratie te beschouwen als een kernmerk van een bepaalde persoon die 'meer' of 'minder' geïntegreerd zou zijn, onderzoeken we of lidmaatschapsrelaties en de sociale verschijnselen waarin ze tot uitdrukking komen, geïntegreerd zijn. Hiermee neemt dit raamwerk expliciet afstand van conventionele integratiebenaderingen: van het analyseren van de integratie van bepaalde mensen (immigranten) gaan we naar een analyse van de integratie van relaties tussen mensen.

## Hoofdstuk 6 – Conclusie

Het herzien van een concept en het ontwikkelen van een bijpassende onderzoeksbenadering is een veelomvattende onderneming, en dit proefschrift biedt slechts de allereerste stap in deze richting. De belangrijkste kracht van het raamwerk van relationele integratie in de huidige vorm is dat het een theoretische conceptie van het *integratieprobleem* biedt. Hiermee zou het empirische onderzoekers moeten helpen onderscheid te maken in wat nu relevante sociale fenomenen zijn bij het onderzoeken van integratie. Ik heb als eerste aanzet hiervoor (i) een conceptie ontwikkeld van het integratieprobleem dat geworteld is in normatieve overwegingen over de onwenselijkheid van relationele ongelijkheid; en (ii) gewezen op sociale legitimatieprocessen als belangrijk sociologisch mechanisme dat ons meer inzicht kan geven in relationele integratieproblemen.

In de conclusie reflecteer ik op de drie problemen die ik heb aangedragen in de inleiding van dit proefschrift, en hoe de notie van relationele integratie een oplossing zou bieden voor deze problemen. Het eerste probleem betreft de integratie-dispensatie voor niet-immigranten, die ons begrip van hoe niet-immigranten intrinsiek onderdeel zijn van het integratieprobleem en -proces vertroebelt. Een relationele benadering verwerpt deze dispensatie door zich te richten op de integratie van lidmaatschapsrelaties in plaats van de 'integratie van immigranten' (of overigens de 'integratie van niet-immigranten'). Bij deze lidmaatschapsrelaties zijn niet-immigranten automatisch betrokken, gezien zij een intrinsiek onderdeel vormen van de constellatie van lidmaatschapsrelaties waarin integratie plaatsvindt.

Door de integratie van lidmaatschapsrelaties centraal te stellen, verandert het primaire onderwerp van integratiestudies. Dit zou onderzoekers in staat moeten stellen om afstand te nemen van de problemen van 'eenrichtingsintegratie', zoals besproken in hoofdstuk 2. Het beeldt de samenleving niet in als een harmonieus geheel - integendeel, het stelt de samenleving voor als het product en de locatie van hiërarchische lidmaatschapsrelaties. Als zodanig plaatst relationele integratie integratieproblemen in het hart van deze samenleving. Dienovereenkomstig wordt integratie ook niet opgevat als een proces waarin immigranten zich moeten conformeren aan een voorbeeld dat door deze samenleving wordt gesteld. Relationele integratieprocessen omvatten het gelijktrekken van hiërarchische lidmaatschapsrelaties binnen de samenleving, in plaats van dat immigranten aan bepaalde voorwaarden voldoen om deel uit te maken van deze samenleving. Ten slotte, omdat het zich richt op de integratie van relaties tussen bewoners, is relationele integratie geen herbevestiging van een onderscheid tussen 'mensen die moeten integreren' en 'mensen voor wie integratie nooit een probleem zal zijn', omdat 'relationele integratie' überhaupt niet kan worden toegeschreven aan individuen. Het verkleint daarmee het risico dat migratiewetenschappers het stigma van de 'niet-geïntegreerde migrant' versterken – een stigma dat zeer sterk leeft in het huidige burgerschapsintegratiediscours.

Het tweede conceptuele probleem is dat veel integratiebenaderingen de betrokkenheid van immigranten beschouwen als een voldoende voorwaarde om een fenomeen een *integratiefenomeen* te laten zijn, zonder hier verder voldoende theoretische verklaring voor te bieden. Daarbij, zo heb ik betoogd, blijft het onduidelijk waarom we integratie zouden moeten onderzoeken, en in welke specifieke verschijnselen we daarbij geïnteresseerd zouden moeten zijn. Het raamwerk van relationele integratie geeft daarom expliciet een normatieve interpretatie van het integratieprobleem. Ik heb betoogd dat relationele integratieproblemen moeten worden begrepen als een subset van relationele ongelijkheid: relationele integratieproblemen hebben betrekking op een gebrek aan erkenning van anderen als gelijken, in de context van immigratie, zodat hiërarchische lidmaatschapsrelaties ontstaan en geïnstitutionaliseerd worden. Deze hiërarchische lidmaatschapsrelaties vormen de basis voor een structureel ongelijke verdeling van zowel materiële als immateriële goederen. Deze relationele benadering zou migratiewetenschappers moeten helpen integratiekwesties te onderscheiden van andere problemen en verschijnselen waarbij immigranten betrokken zijn, die niet noodzakelijkerwijs betrekking hebben op integratie, of die op zichzelf niet voldoende informatie verschaffen om gefundeerde uitspraken te kunnen doen over integratie.

Wat betreft de besproken kwesties rond burgerschapsintegrationisme, roep ik collega-migratiewetenschappers op tot precisie en voorzichtigheid in hun conceptualisering van integratie, om zo de politisering van het onderzoeksveld aan te pakken. Als migratiewetenschappers dragen wij verantwoordelijkheid voor de normatieve en politieke implicaties van onze conceptualisaties, categorisering en operationalisering. Ik pleit er daarom voor dat we expliciet onze normatieve en theoretische aannames uiteen moeten zetten, en ook aandacht moeten besteden aan de normatieve implicaties van onze eigen onderzoeksbenaderingen.

Tot slot: als we ons begrip van relationele integratie willen uitbreiden als het dynamische, interactieve sociale fenomeen dat ik heb betoogd, moet het raamwerk verder worden ontwikkeld.

Daartoe sluit ik de conclusie af met een eerste reeks vragen over de operationalisering van relationele integratie; de verantwoordelijkheid voor relationele integratie; en ons begrip van vooruitgang in termen van relationele integratie. Zij vormen een eerste aanknopingspunt voor een verdere ontwikkeling van dit theoretisch raamwerk, om zo integratie als relationeel proces beter te kunnen begrijpen en onderzoeken.



# Chapter 11



Acknowledgements

Thanks to my supervisors, Eric, Floris, and Ton, for providing me the chance to do this research, for the support and space to make it my own, and for all the rigorous feedback which has pushed me to bring this dissertation to a higher level.

Thanks to the DIA and Charlotte, for being such an attentive employer, facilitating all my professional needs and never forgetting my birthday.

Thanks to my paranymphs, Fenneke and Fatiha, for showcasing their unconditional trust in me as a thinker and an academic. For being an inspiration with their moral compasses, unlimited curiosity in the social world, and amazing sense of humour. Let's continue to conquer our places in this world.

Thanks to the colleagues who have selflessly devoted their time to this project throughout the years, by reading my work and offering their feedback and all sorts of strategic advice. In particular I want to mention Enzo, Johan, Luara, Natalie, Saskia, and Wouter. You have made all the difference.

Thanks to Dora Kostakopoulou and Richard Alba for giving me a chance to explore the academic world beyond the University of Amsterdam. Also, thanks to the wonderful PhD- and master students at CUNY for making me feel at home so quickly.

Thanks to Marjukka for sparking my interest in the Danish participation discourse and joining me in my first publishing adventure. For being both a rigorous academic and a wonderfully warm human being.

Thanks to all the delightful inhabitants of B10.01 and adjacent offices, for maintaining such a relaxed and supportive atmosphere, and sharing advice, cakes, experiences, thoughts, doubts, complaints, triumphs, airbnbs, and drinks. In particular, I want to thank Anne Louise, Ellis, Hannah, Lars, Lianne, Natalie, Ugur, and Wouter.

Thanks to Anouk for being an amazing colleague without technically being a colleague. For expressing the sincerest joy in helping me compose the perfect email or abstract, for always finding the time to do so, and for all the drinks and laughs along the way.

Thanks to all the friends and family who have endured my stories about the challenges of doing a PhD. For nodding understandingly during my rants, for surprising me with gifts and food and laughter and love and music and all the moral support I could have ever wished for. For putting things into perspective, and for making sure that I would not forget that there is a whole world out there in which the logic of academia makes no sense at all. A thought that proved to be soothing time and time again.

Thanks to my parents, for nurturing my curiosity and supporting my intellectual development from the day I was born. For teaching me to celebrate my efforts, rather than my successes. For providing me with the confidence that I could do this.

Thanks to Micha for being there and for being so incredibly amazing.





